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Preference for User Experience
on the part of Army FA 97
Contracting Officers

by

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ABSTRACT

There is an apparent contradiction within the U.S. Army Acquisition Corps between the stated intent to capitalize on the operational experience of the military members of the Corps, and the philosophy used in distributing officers within the Corps. Following enactment of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act in 1990 the Army created the Army Acquisition Corps (AAC). A review of the billets available for Functional Area 97 contracting officers, however, reveals that well over half of the positions are coded for branch immaterial officers, meaning any officer from any branch can fill the slot. The objective of this thesis is to examine the rationale behind the current organization of contracting personnel in an attempt to determine whether there should be more FA 97 positions coded to require branch, or branch-type, specific officers, as well as to identify where the billets should be.

A survey of 175 senior officers in the AAC was conducted in order to gauge the level of command preference for user experience on the part of contracting officers. Respondents indicated that: an increase in the level of emphasis placed on branch coding FA 97 billets should be beneficial but that a determination as to the cost of an increased reliance must first be made; the best level for branch coding decisions is at the organizational level; and there does exist a relationship between the Career Management Fields and the AMC MACOM commodity group organization. Additionally, the research indicated that there are no existing prohibitions in place that prevent, or bar, the

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The thesis recommends that: the FA 97 proponency office explore the feasibility of increasing the level of branch reliance and that the office publish a policy letter governing the emphasis on branch coding; PERSCOM alter the assignment policy used for assigning FA 97 officers; and a detailed, in-depth review of each FA 97 position be conducted by the AMC MACOMs based on the specific functional duties performed by each. The focus of this review must be on whether or not a branch specific officer could fill the position more effectively than a non-branch affiliated officer.

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I. INTRODUCTION

We are now witnessing the death of management. By management, I mean the peculiarly American idea (still taught at many business schools) that a "good manager" should be able to manage any enterprise, anywhere, any time. Through incisive analysis and decisive action, our supermanagers supposedly could make any company productive and profitable.

With hindsight, we can see the absurdity. We don't imagine a winning football coach switching to basketball, nor a concert pianist becoming a symphony violinist. We don't think an orthopedic surgeon would automatically make a good psychiatrist. We recognize that differences in talent, temperament, knowledge and experience make some people good at some things and not at others.[20]

The quote above is taken from an article by Robert J. Samuelson in which he takes a critical view of the commonly held belief that *managers* can manage without possessing in-depth knowledge of, or prior experience with, the business they are charged with managing [20]. The quote readily summarizes the critical issue of the thesis at hand - whether or not U.S. Army contracting officers are the "supermanagers" to which Samuelson refers, or should their previous operational experience play a role in the billets to which these officers are assigned.

A. GENERAL.

In 1990 the United States Congress enacted the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) which mandated specific criteria to be met by Department of Defense (DOD) personnel performing procurement related duties. One particular mandate of DAWIA was that by 1 October 1993 the Defense Department

had to establish a professional acquisition workforce [8: s.1644]. As a result, the U.S. Total Army Personnel Command (PERSCOM) established the U.S. Army Acquisition Corps (AAC) the purpose of which was to "...establish a combined, specialized corps of military and civilian acquisition professionals." [25: p.1]

The military portion of the AAC is composed of officers serving in one of three Functional Areas (FAs): FA 51-Research, Development and Acquisition; FA 53-Systems Automation; and FA 97-Contracting and Industrial Management. The personnel managers at PERSCOM were faced with two fundamental issues in deciding how to establish the Acquisition Corps. First, they had to determine from where the AAC population would be drawn. Second, they had to devise a plan for employing the population within the AAC. In essence, PERSCOM had to answer two questions: How do we bring officers in to the AAC? Once we bring them in, how do we distribute the officers within the AAC? The method used for answering each of these questions is discussed below along with an examination of how the two methods impacted on the FA 97 Contracting officers.

1. **Bringing officers in to the AAC population.** In building the AAC two major issues that had to be addressed were the branch composition of the officers being drawn into the corps, and the overall size of the corps in terms of total number of officers.

Every officer in the United States Army is, upon his/her commissioning, designated with one of 15 primary basic branches that determine the Career Management Field (CMF) in which the

officer will serve for at least their initial eight to ten years of service and in most cases their entire careers. According to the Army's manual, Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Utilization, during each officer's initial period of service "...professional development and development of the skills associated with (the) officer's branch are emphasized through assignments and training." [24: p.7] Basic branches are further grouped into one of three categories: Combat Arms (CA), Combat Support (CS), and Combat Service Support (CSS). For the purpose of this thesis, branches will be categorized as either combat arms or non-combat arms. The six branches, and their associated CMFs, that comprise the combat arms category are: Infantry-CMF 11, Armor-CMF 12, Field Artillery-CMF 13, Air Defense Artillery-CMF 14, Aviation-CMF 15, and Special Forces-CMF 18.

In order to identify the branch composition, as well as the size, of the AAC, PERSCOM relied upon a projection of what the Army would "look like" after the force reduction was completed. This projection, known as Notional Force-25 (NOF-25), depicts the total size and branch composition of the entire Army. Ostensibly, the "...basic premise of the distribution methodology is that the percentage of participation in the AAC by branch should reflect the composition of the Army." [25: p.7] The percentages of branch participation in the AAC differed somewhat from the NOF-25 projections based on a reduced participation by some branches due to their relative strength and ability to "lose" officers to the Acquisition Corps. The NOF projection was combined with a model

known as the Acquisition Cohort Life Cycle Model (ACLCM) which identified the requisite number of O-6s needed to "...perform duties in acquisition critical (4Z) positions predicted by the notional force (NOF) of the future...." [25: p.7] Based on the required number of Colonels, PERSCOM "reverse-aged" the population to the O-3 level using a model that "...accounts for attrition, enhanced promotion rates, required stability..." and the ability of each branch to lose officers. The result of the NOF projections and the ACLCM was an ultimate corps' size of 2500 officers in the grades of O-3 through O-6. The branch composition of the Acquisition Corps is depicted in Figure 1 below.

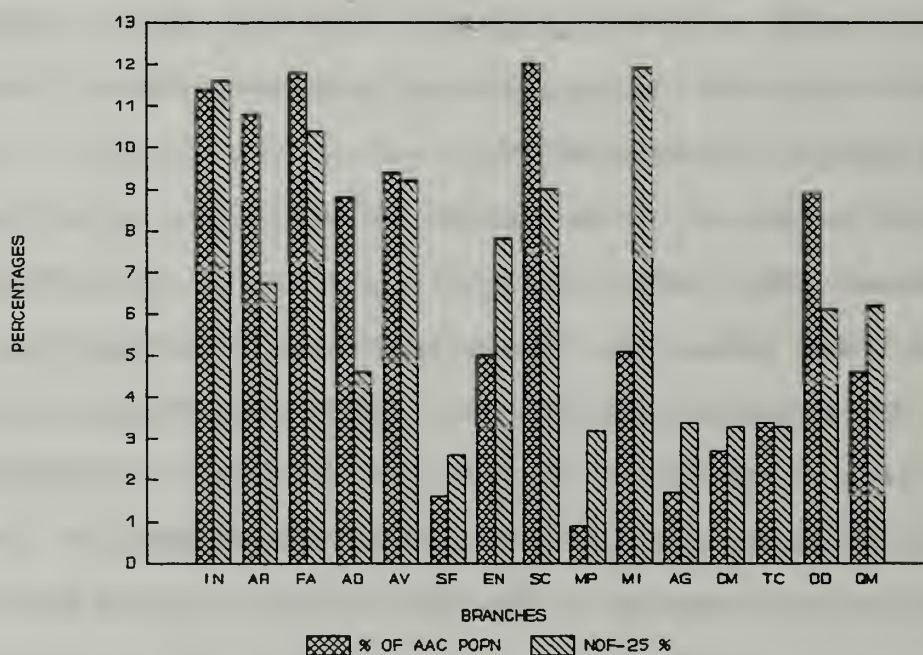


Figure 1. AAC POPULATION BY BRANCH. Source: [12]

2. Distributing officers within the AAC. Given the population of the AAC as determined by the ACLCM and NOF-25, the next step was to develop a position list that identified the

billets in which the officers would serve. This was accomplished by having each Major Command (MACOM) in the acquisition community identify their requirements for uniformed officers. This requirements list was then validated by a panel of senior acquisition officers (known as the Council of Colonels) and reconciled with the available pool of officers in the population. In identifying their needs the MACOMs were responsible for also identifying the branch requirements for each of their positions. [14]

Based on the ACLCM, NOF-25, and the position requirements as identified/validated by the MACOMs and Council of Colonels, PERSCOM developed a Military Acquisition Position List (MAPL) showing 2236 billets in a variety of Army, Joint, and DOD acquisition organizations. Each billet is coded in one of three ways. The code will indicate either: the basic branch from which the officer should come (e.g. Infantry, Signal Corps, Ordinance, etc.); it will indicate a branch type (e.g. Combat Arms, Combat Support, or Combat Service Support), or it will be coded as a "branch immaterial" position meaning an officer from any branch can be assigned to fill the position.

A question that remains is whether or not the philosophy used in building the corps carried through to the method used in distributing the population within the corps. The corps was built so as to "...reflect the composition of the Army..." [25: p.7] in terms of basic branches. One of the primary purposes for including a uniformed presence in the AAC at all (as opposed to a completely

civilian corps), was "...to capitalize on the operational experience of the military officers...." [25: p.2] Additionally, as previously stated, an officer's operational experience is gained during assignments in his/her basic branch [24: p.7]. If the Corps is built so as to reflect the branch composition of the Army, the purpose of having officers is to capitalize on their operational experience, and the operational experience of officers is developed through service in their basic branch, it would only seem to make intuitive sense that the MAPL should be built so as to mirror the branch composition of the corps. It appears that it does not.

A review of the Acquisition Corps population of 2500 officers shows that 44.4% are combat arms officers and 55.6% are non-combat arms [12]. See Figure 2 on the following page. The same review of the MAPL indicates that of 2236 billets, or slots, 24.1% are coded for combat arms, 21.3 % are coded for non-combat arms, and 54.6% are coded as branch immaterial [13]. See Figure 3 on the following page.

As the graphs seem to indicate, there is an apparent "disconnection" between the philosophy for *building* (i.e. bringing officers in) the AAC in terms of the stated desire for operational experience, and the philosophy for *employing* (i.e. distributing) the officers within the AAC in that over half of the billets are branch immaterial. This disconnection becomes even more apparent when we zero in on the FA 97 Contracting officers.

3. Impact on FA 97 Contracting Officers. The FA 97

AAC POPULATION BY BRANCH TYPE

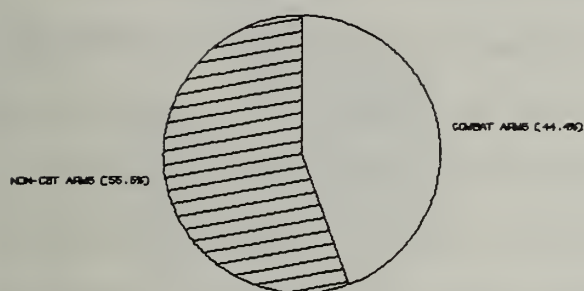


Figure 2: AAC POPULATION BY BRANCH TYPE. Source [12]

AAC BILLETS BY BRANCH TYPE

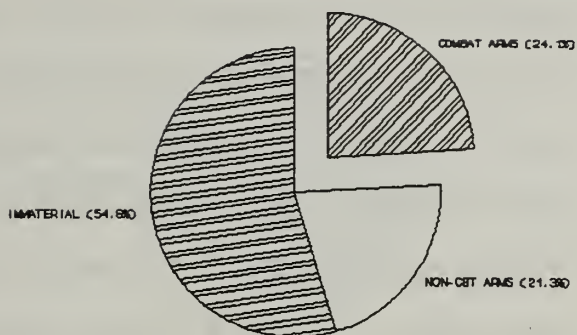


Figure 3. AAC BILLETS BY BRANCH TYPE. Source: [13]

population constitutes 23.4%, or 585, of the total AAC inventory of 2500 officers and is 49% combat arms officers. Of the 2236 billets, or slots, on the MAPL, 534 are designated for FA 97 officers. A review of the MAPL for the entire Acquisition Corps reveals that 54.6% are branch immaterial, 24.1% are combat arms, and 21.3% are non-combat arms [7]. The same review for the FA 97 slots reveals that 83.5% are coded as branch immaterial, 6.8% are coded for combat arms officers, and 9.7% are coded for non-combat arms. [13:]. Adhering to the philosophy that a picture is worth a thousand words, the graphic comparison of the FA 97 population with the FA 97 billets by branch type reveals what appears to be a significant disparity between *building* the FA 97 population, and *employing* that population. See Figures 4 and 5 on the following page.

The bottom line here is that the philosophy used in distributing the officers within the AAC, particularly in terms of

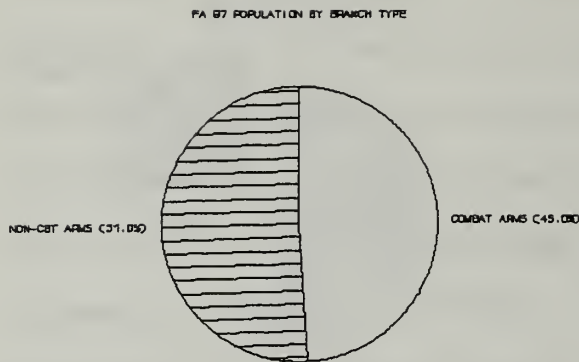


Figure 4. FA97 POPULATION BY BRANCH TYPE. Source: [13]

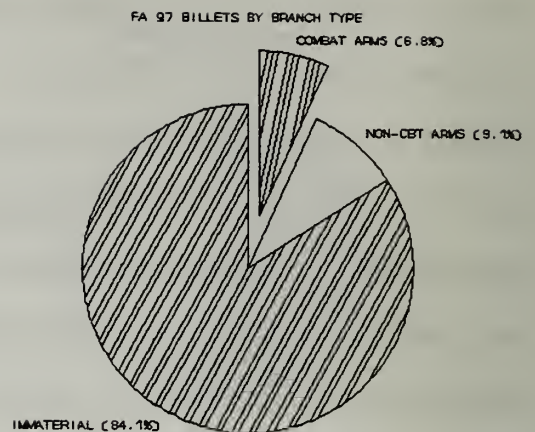


Figure 5. FA97 BILLETS BY BRANCH TYPE. Source: [13]

combat arms officers and FA 97 officers, seems to contradict the stated intent to capitalize on the operational experience of the military members of the Corps. Based on the published guidance and stated intentions for building the AAC, one would think that officers should be assigned to acquisition billets that will allow them to bring their expertise to bear on the types of equipment, supplies, and services with which they are operationally familiar. Lieutenant General Cianciolo, the then Director of Acquisition Career Management (DACM), stated that if he (the General) were a young officer considering a career shift into the AAC he would consider it a plus to have the opportunity to "...see to it that the skills and knowledge I have can be brought to bear in a manner that enhances the defense of the United States and particularly the Army." [6: p.9] The question that begs itself is to what extent this is true for the FA 97 portion of the AAC.

B. OBJECTIVES.

The objective of this thesis is to examine the rationale behind the current organization of contracting personnel within the Acquisition Corps with an eye towards determining whether or not sufficient emphasis has been placed on basic branch (i.e. operational experience) in coding billets for FA 97 Contracting Officers. More specifically, the thesis will attempt to determine whether there should be more FA 97 positions coded to require branch, or branch-type, specific officers, as well as to identify where the billets should be.

C. RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

The following research questions will be answered by the thesis.

Primary. Should operational, or user, experience be a factor in the assignment of Contracting Officers to commands responsible for procuring supplies and services?

Subsidiary.

1. What commands are responsible for procuring supplies and services?

2. What is the legislative, regulatory, and command guidance concerning the preference for user experience and knowledge on the part of the cognizant Contracting Officer?

3. What was the rationale behind the development of the basic branch coding in the current fielding plan of the uniformed Contracting Officers in the Army Acquisition Corps?

4. To what extent, and under what conditions, would a

lack of user experience on the part of the Procuring Contracting Officer reduce the effectiveness of an acquisition action?

5. Should specific user experience be required for officers being assigned to duties as Contracting Officers in commands that buy supplies and services?

D. SCOPE, LIMITATIONS, AND ASSUMPTIONS.

1. Scope. The scope of the thesis will include the Functional Area 97 population of the Acquisition Corps, and will largely disregard the FA 51 and FA 53 officers as the nature and specific functions associated with their jobs differs significantly from that of the FA 97 officers. Additionally, the focus is on the FA 97 procurement billets within Department of the Army organizations (e.g. AMC), and will, for the most part, exclude the positions in Department of Defense contract administration agencies (e.g. DLA).

2. Limitations. The research will be limited by the fact that the Acquisition Corps is still in its relative infancy because it is only two years old. There will therefore be a relative dearth of historical data or prior research on the Acquisition Corps itself as an organizational entity. This fact will be mitigated to some extent by the fact that there has been abundant research conducted with reference to the *functions* performed by the acquisition community prior to the establishment of the Acquisition Corps. Consequently a large amount of this prior research will be applicable to the research undertaken here.

3. Assumptions. The following assumptions will be used in preparing the thesis report.

a. Any reader of the thesis is assumed to have a fundamental understanding of the Defense Department and Army in general, and at least a surface familiarity with the procedures and functions associated with the acquisition community.

b. It is assumed that the provisions of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) will remain in force indefinitely.

c. It is assumed that the Army Acquisition Corps (in terms of relative size and composition), as well as the current organization of the Army acquisition community (i.e. the Army Materiel Command and its subordinate Major Commands), will remain fundamentally unchanged for the foreseeable future.

E. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS.

A complete list of pertinent abbreviations and acronyms is provided at Appendix A. Several key terms, however, are shown below.

1. AAC: Army Acquisition Corps. "A combined, specialized corps of military and civilian acquisition professionals..." designed to "...capitalize on the operational experience of the military officers and technical skills of the civilians." [25: pp.1-2]

2. AMC: Army Materiel Command. A four-star General Officer level command that is subordinate to the Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA), it is the headquarters for the Army buying, or "systems," commands (e.g. TACOM, MICOM, etc.). The primary missions for AMC involve providing functional/matrix support to the PEO/PM

organizations, and providing program/commodity management for non-PEO/PM managed programs (i.e. mature programs). [10]

3. Branch: A "...grouping of officers which comprises an arm or service of the Army and in which an officer is commissioned, transferred, trained, developed, and promoted." [24: p.6]

4. CMF: Career Management Field. A CMF is "... a grouping of duty positions made up of skills and requirements which are mutually supporting and culminate in the development of officers skills necessary to perform at the LTC or COL level." [24: p.6]

5. DAWIA: Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act. Chapter 87, Title XII, Public Law 101-510. This act was attached as a rider to the FY 91 Defense Authorization Act [16: p.2].

6. FA: Functional Area. "A grouping of officers by career field other than arm, service, or branch that possess an interrelated grouping of tasks or skills which usually requires significant education, training, and experience." [24: p.7]

7. FA 97: Functional Area 97-Contracting and Industrial Management. An FA 97 officer is "...responsible for overall development, implementation, management, direction and control of procurement programs, program planning and general supervision of major procurement activities....". Additionally, an FA 97 officer is often "...warranted to legally obligate the U.S. Government" by entering into contractual agreements with private contractors. [24: p.91]

8. MACOM: Major Command. The term MACOM refers to Major subordinate commands and varies based on the context in which it is

used. In the context of this thesis the term refers to the systems, or buying, commands directly subordinate to AMC.

9. PEO/PM: Program Executive Officer/Program Manager. A PEO is a two-star level organization that is directly subordinate to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Research, Development, and Acquisition (ASA-RDA). There are numerous PEO organizations that provide oversight of critical programs that fall within their area of concentration. The AMC buying commands provide matrix support to the PEO/PMs throughout the life cycle of an acquisition program.

10. User (operational) experience: The Webster's Dictionary defines **operational** as an "adj. of or connected with an operation, esp. a military one..." [26: p.703], and **experience** as a "n. the knowledge or feeling obtained through direct impressions//the skill or judgment gained by practice...." [26: p.332]. In instructing the AMC MACOMs to prepare validation documents for the AAC billets, PERSCOM told the MACOMs to assign each position a Military Essentiality Reason (MER) code which would be based on a requirement for "...experience of a first-hand nature acquired by participating in or conducting military operations, tactics, or systems operations" [11: p. 8]. For the purposes of this thesis, user experience is defined as the knowledge, skill, or judgment gained through the practice or conduct of military operations.

F. ORGANIZATION OF STUDY.

Chapter II (Background) will discuss the following three major areas. The historical development of the current Army Acquisition

Corps to include an examination of DAWIA. The organization of the Army Materiel Command (AMC) and the Program Executive Officer (PEO) structure which, together, comprise the Army acquisition community. The tasks/functions, and types of assignments for FA 97 officers.

Chapter III (Research Methodology) will describe the personal interviews as well as the rationale behind, and strategy for, conducting the written survey of senior Acquisition Corps officers.

Chapter IV (Data Presentation and Analysis) will provide a synopsis of the salient findings of the personal interviews, a summary of the raw survey results, and a statistical analysis of the survey results in order to ascertain whether the results favor or disfavor a preference for user experience.

Chapter V (Discussion) will focus on interpretations of the *intent* of the literature/documents with regards to preference for user experience, as well as a discussion on how the statistical analysis of the survey results can be interpreted in terms of a preference for user experience.

Chapter VI (Conclusions and Recommendations) will discuss the conclusions that can be made based on the analysis and will recommend indicated changes or modifications to the current FA 97 organization with specific regard to branch coding FA 97 billets. Additionally this chapter will provide recommended areas for further research.

II. BACKGROUND

A. GENERAL.

In order to facilitate the discussion, we must first explore the events leading to the formulation of an Army Acquisition Corps. This chapter will specifically address the key events preceding DAWIA; the key provisions and requirements imposed by DAWIA; the organizational structures and missions of both the Army Materiel Command (AMC) and the Program Executive Offices (PEOs) which together comprise the majority of the Army Acquisition Corps; and a description of the tasks/functions and assignment types of FA 97 officers.

B. STUDIES PRIOR TO DAWIA.

There have been numerous studies and events that examined the military and Federal acquisition process and played a significant role in leading to the circumstances surrounding the DAWIA enactment. The paragraphs below provide a brief description of several key events that preceded the DAWIA passage. These include the recommendations of the Commission on Government Procurement, issuance of Executive Order 12352, the issuance of the Federal Acquisition Regulation, and the recommendations of the President's Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management.

1. **Commission on Government Procurement (COGP).** The COGP was chartered by Congress in 1969 to conduct a "...comprehensive investigation of the government procurement process." [21: p.102] The primary thrust of the commission's report (issued in 1972) dealt with the establishment of the Office of Federal Procurement

Policy (OFPP) to provide for centralized development and management of procurement policy as part of an "...integrated system for effective management, control, and operation of the federal procurement process.'" [21] One of the key elements of the recommended procurement system was steps to be taken to "...assure professionalism in procurement and the availability of competent, trained personnel." [21: p.103] Ten years later, in 1982, the OFPP issued a report proposing a Uniform Federal Procurement System (UFPS) a feature of which would be a professional work force [21: p.32].

2. **Presidential Executive Order 12352.** President Reagan issued this order in 1982 closely on the heels of the UFPS proposal. In it the president directed, amongst other things, that the heads of all executive agencies "establish career management programs, covering the full range of personnel management functions, that will result in a highly qualified, well managed professional..." acquisition work force, and that a single federal acquisition regulation be completed by the end of 1982 [21: p.377].

3. **Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR).** Despite the Presidential edict it wasn't until 1984 that the OFPP, in conjunction with the DOD, GSA, and NASA, issued the FAR. The regulation is a comprehensive document that establishes detailed policies and procedures to be followed in the conduct of all government procurement processes. In terms of this thesis, however, the FAR is relatively vague in terms of detailed description/definition of requisite skills or knowledge for

contracting officers. It does define, functionally, what a contracting officer does and it provides the following criteria for use by officials in appointing contracting officers.

(a) Experience in Government contracting and administration, commercial purchasing, or related fields;

(b) Education or special training in business administration, law, accounting, engineering, or related fields;

(c) Knowledge of acquisition policies and procedures, including this and other applicable regulations;

(d) Specialized knowledge in the particular assigned field of contracting; and

(e) Satisfactory completion of acquisition training courses. [17: p.1-9]

4. **The President's Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management.** This commission, commonly known as the Packard Commission, was appointed by President Reagan in 1985. Its purpose was to conduct a broad examination of the DOD's command and control system, and "...the administrative procedures for conducting the acquisition and procurement programs." [21: p.34] In its 1986 final report to the President the commission made almost twenty recommendations concerning ways to eradicate the "...root causes of defense problems." [18: p.1] One recommendation that is particularly germane to this thesis, and which played a significant role as an impetus for the DAWIA legislation, related to the enhancement of the quality of the acquisition workforce. The specific recommendation is shown below.

DOD must be able to attract and retain the caliber of people necessary for a quality acquisition program. Significant improvements should be made in the senior-level appointment system. The Secretary of Defense should have increased authority to establish flexible personnel management policies necessary to improve defense acquisition. An alternate personnel management system should be established to include senior

acquisition personnel and contracting officers as well as scientists and engineers. Federal regulations should establish business-related education and experience criteria for civilian contracting personnel, which will provide a basis for the professionalization of their career paths. Federal law should permit expanded opportunities for the education and training of all civilian acquisition personnel. [19: p.27]

5. **Summary.** It should be noted that the primary focus of the majority of actions previous to DAWIA was the acquisition process itself. The personnel performing the process were almost universally an ancillary concern. The prior recommendations could best be characterized as possessing little real substance. Congressman Mavroules, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee's Subcommittee on Investigations stated that the problem was in implementing the recommendations. As he put it there had "...been plenty of talk and lots of paper, but not much action." [16: p.18] The passage of DAWIA marked the first major action that focused exclusively on acquisition personnel.

C. DAWIA.

The overriding purpose of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act, Public Law 101-510, Title XII (attached as a rider to the Fiscal Year 1991 Defense Authorization Act), was to "...mandate the creation of a professional acquisition work force and corps within each of the military services and the defense agencies." [16: p.16]

Prior to drafting the legislation the Subcommittee on Investigations of the House Armed Services Committee conducted a "...year-long review of the 'state of the acquisition work force'." [16: p.16] The study identified "...major gaps in the career

development of acquisition personnel." [16: p.17] Specifically the study found that the civilian to military mix in the acquisition community was unsatisfactory in terms of "...long-standing policies to appoint civilians to positions not requiring a military officer"; the Services were not complying with Program Manager tenure requirements; acquisition workforce education and training programs were being poorly managed; and contracting officers were woefully undereducated with "half of the people who work in contracting..." lacking a college degree [16: p.17]. As a result of the study findings the subcommittee decided that "...a comprehensive program [was] needed to ensure required improvement in the quality and professionalism of those individuals working in acquisition positions..." and that DAWIA would "...address this goal by establishing the framework for a career program..." for personnel in the acquisition community [16: p.17].

The five major subchapters of the legislation are: General Authority and Responsibilities, Defense Acquisition Positions, Acquisition Corps, Education and Training, and General Management Provisions. Each area is briefly described in the following paragraphs.

1. **General Authority and Responsibilities.** This subchapter mandates the establishment of the office of Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition (USDA) who "...shall carry out all powers, functions, and duties of the Secretary of Defense with respect to the acquisition workforce in the Department of Defense." [8: s.1702] The chapter further mandates the creation of a Director of

Acquisition, Education, Training, and Career Development subordinate to the USDA as well as the establishment of Acquisition Executives and Directors of Acquisition Career Management (DACMs) in each of the Services [8: ss.1703-1705]. In the Army this requirement is met by the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Research, Development, and Acquisition (ASA-RDA) under whom falls a DACM for each of the military and civilian portions of the Army Acquisition Corps.

2. **Defense Acquisition Positions.** Subchapter II of the law identified specific position categories that had to be considered as "acquisition positions". These included: Program Managers; systems planning, research, development, engineering, and testing; contracting; industrial property management; logistics managers; quality control personnel; manufacturing/production managers; business, cost estimating, budget, and audit personnel; education, training, and career development; construction; and any personnel involved in joint development/production with non-DOD agencies or foreign governments [8: s.1640].

3. **Acquisition Corps.** This portion of DAWIA directed that each service must establish a dedicated Acquisition Corps and specified the selection criteria for Corps membership for any member as well as selection criteria for Corps members filling "critical positions." In general any member of an Acquisition Corps must be an O-4/GS-13 or higher, possess a bachelor's degree, and have a minimum of four years of acquisition experience. Critical positions were mandated to include PEOs, PMs/Deputy PMs,

and senior contracting officials and any person filling a critical position billet must be an O-5/GS-14 or higher in grade. Additionally the law specified detailed assignment and previous experience requirements for any person serving in a critical acquisition position. For critical contracting positions the person must be assigned for a minimum of three years and must have no less than four years prior experience in contracting assignments. The PMS/DPMS must have eight years prior acquisition experience while PEOs must have ten years with at least four being in a critical position. [8: ss.1644-1646]

4. **Education and Training.** This subchapter simply directs the Secretary of Defense to establish specific educational and training programs in order to facilitate the career development of acquisition personnel. Specifically it requires the establishment of an intern, cooperative education, and scholarship program to identify, train, fund, and educate potential acquisition corps candidates. It further mandates the creation of a Defense Acquisition University structure to oversee the "...professional educational development and training of the acquisition workforce..." and the "...research and analysis of defense acquisition policy issues...." [8: s.1653]

5. **General Management Provisions.** The final portion of the law directed the SECDEF to emplace a management information system that would be "...capable of providing standardized information to the Secretary on persons serving in acquisition positions." [8: s.1653] This subchapter further required several detailed reports

that the DOD must provide to Congress annually on the status of DOD's compliance with DAWIA.

D. DAWIA'S IMPACT ON THE ARMY ACQUISITION CORPS.

The most significant impact DAWIA had, in terms of the management of the AAC, was the specific prior-experience requirements for personnel serving in both the acquisition corps in general and specifically in critical acquisition positions. Prior to the passage of DAWIA officers would "dual track" by alternately serving assignments in their primary branch and their functional area (e.g. an Infantry officer with a functional area 97 designation would serve an initial assignment in an FA 97 billet and then return to an Infantry assignment). Based on the requirements (as outlined in Subchapter III of the Act) it was decided that the prior dual track method was untenable because officers would be unable to meet the DAWIA requirements on the one hand, while damaging their promotion potential on the other hand due to the length of time an officer would have to "be away" from his/her basic branch. The result was the establishment of the Army Acquisition Corps as a one-way street, if you will, in which officers would enter the AAC at approximately their eighth year of service (typically as a Captain) and then remain in the AAC for the duration of their careers.

E. ARMY MATERIEL COMMAND/PROGRAM EXECUTIVE OFFICERS.

The three major structures in which FA 97 officers serve are the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), the Army Materiel Command (AMC), and the Program Executive Officer (PEO) structure. The DLA

provides post-award contract administration services through Defense Contract Management Districts (DCMDs), Area Operations (DCMAOs), and resident Defense Plant Representative Offices (DPROs). Since the focus of this thesis is on pre-award Procurement Contracting Officer billets in the Army buying commands, as opposed to the Administrative Contracting Officer billets found in DLA, we will not explore the roles and functions of DLA any further. The AMC and PEO structures and missions along with a discussion of how the two interrelate is presented below.

1. **Army Materiel Command.** In the most fundamental terms AMC's mission is to research, develop, acquire, and sustain/maintain supplies and services for the United States Army. Functionally this translates to providing program management of mature, non-major acquisition systems and equipment; providing functional/matrix support to PEOs and their respective Program Managers; and conducting technical research to develop new technology [10]. AMC is organized to accomplish its mission through eight major subordinate commands (MACOMs) under whom are fifty-two additional organizations. Each of the MACOMs and their associated sub-units are oriented to specific commodity groupings so that each MACOM is responsible for a unique commodity line [9]. An organizational chart depicting the AMC MACOMs and a chart showing the MACOM commodity groupings are shown on the following page in Figures 6 and 7.

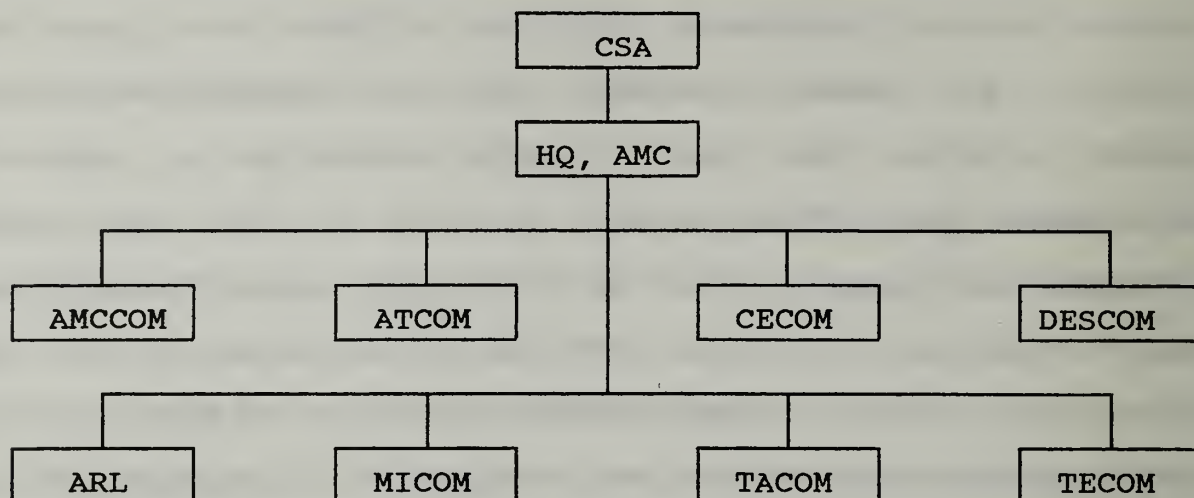


Figure 6. AMC MACOM Organization. Source [9]

AMC MACOM Commodity Breakdown.

a) U.S. Army Armament, Munitions, & Chemical Command (AMCCOM): weapons and ammunition, nuclear and nonnuclear munitions, weapons systems and support equipment, fire control equipment, rocket and missile warhead sections, demolition munitions, mines, bombs, grenades, pyrotechnics, boosters, offensive and defensive chemical materiel, and flame and incendiary systems.

b) U.S. Army Aviation and Troop Command (ATCOM): aircraft, aircraft engines, structural components and ground support equipment, watercraft, marine and railroad transportation, electric power generators, bridging and stream crossing, water purification, air conditioning and heating, camouflage, countermines, fuel and fuel handling equipment, clothing, body armor, footwear, food, food service equipment, tentage, parachutes, and air delivery equipment.

c) U.S. Army Communications & Electronic Command (CECOM): communications, communications electronics intelligence equipment, electronic warfare, aviation electronics, combat surveillance, target acquisition and night vision equipment, photographic and microfilming equipment, identification friend or foe systems, automatic data processing, radar, meteorological and electronic radiological detection materiel, batteries, and electric

power supply equipment.

d) U.S. Army Depot System Command (DESCOM): operates Army depots in the receipt, storage, issue, maintenance, and disposal of assigned commodities.

e) U.S. Army Research Laboratory (ARL): conducts a broad based multidisciplinary program of scientific research and advanced technology directed toward new and improved materials, components, subsystems, techniques and processes.

f) U.S. Army Missile Command (MICOM): free rockets, guided missiles, ballistic missiles, targets, air defense, fire control coordination equipment, related special purpose and multisystem test equipment, missile launching and ground support equipment, Army missile systems and laser weapons.

g) U.S. Army Tank-Automotive Command (TACOM): combat, tactical, special purpose vehicles (e.g. automotive systems, engines, transmissions, armor materials), carriers (e.g. personnel, cargo, missile, and rearm), trailers, tractors, the Armed Forces vehicle fleet, construction equipment, material handling equipment, and tactical vehicles for the DOD and foreign allies.

h) U.S. Army Test & Evaluation Command (TECOM): manages proving grounds, installations, boards, and facilities required to test equipment, weapons, and materiel systems; to plan and conduct tests of materiel intended for use by the Army.

Figure 7. AMC MACOM Commodity Groupings. Source: [9]

2. **Program Executive Officers.** The Department of Defense manages the acquisition of supplies and equipment (above the small purchase threshold), through the use of Acquisition Programs which are "...directed, funded efforts that are designed to provide a new or improved materiel capability" to fulfill an identified need [23: p.15-2]. Each program is managed by a Program Manager (PM) who in turn reports to a Program Executive Officer (PEO). In some cases a PM may report to a MACOM commander (usually for mature, non-

developmental programs), or directly to the ASA-RDA (for programs deemed to be especially critical for the Army). PEO is defined as "a military or civilian official who has primary responsibility for directing several...programs". [23: p.15-14] The chain of command for PEOs and PMs "...extends from a DOD component Acquisition Executive through Program Executive Offices to individual Program Managers." [22: p.1-7] In the Army Acquisition Corps, PEOs are organized along commodity groupings much in the same way as the AMC MACOMs. As of this writing there are twelve Program Executive Officers in the PEO structure. The chart below identifies each PEO and representative samples of each one's key acquisition programs.

PEO Structure

- a) PEO Air Defense: Air-to-air missiles; Avenger air defense system; Patriot; Anti-tactical missile defense; Forward area air defense sensors and target identification office.
- b) PEO Armaments: Paladin howitzer; 9mm pistol; Sense and destroy armor (SADARM); Tank main armaments system.
- c) PEO Armored Systems Modernization: Abrams tank; M1A1 tank; Bradley fighting vehicle; Armored gun system (AGS); Combat mobility vehicle.
- d) PEO Aviation: Advanced attack helicopter; Avionics; Aircraft survivability equipment; Comanche; Kiowa warrior; Longbow weapon system for the Apache; CH-47 modernization.
- e) PEO Combat Support: Heavy tactical vehicles; Light tactical vehicles; Medium tactical vehicles.
- f) PEO Command and Control Systems: Air Defense command and control systems; All source analysis system; Communications processing and interface module; Strategic command and control software; Combat terrain information system.
- g) PEO Communication Systems: Army data distribution system; Global positioning system (GPS); Mobile subscriber equipment (MSE); Communications management systems; Satellite communications (SATCOM); Single channel ground and airborne systems (SINCGARS); Universal modem.

h) PEO Fire Support: Air-to-ground missiles; Hellfire missile system; Army tactical missile system (ATACMS); Javelin missile; Multiple launch rocket system (MLRS); Bradley-TOW subsystem.

i) PEO Intelligence and Electronic Warfare: Guardrail/common sensor; Stingray laser; Joint surveillance target attack radar system (JSTARS); Night vision electro optics; Radar; Firefinder; Signals warfare; Tactical jammer.

j) PEO Standard Army Management Information Systems: Integrated logistics systems; Army food management information system; Standard Army ammunition system; Standard Army retail supply system; Standard property book system.

k) PEO Strategic Defense: Anti-sattelite (ASAT); Ballistic missile defense; Ground based interceptor; Ground based surveillance and tracking system; High endoatmospheric defense interceptor; Hypervelocity launcher.

l) PEO Cruise Missiles Project/Unmanned Aerial Vehicles: (Joint Project); Army unmanned aerial vehicles; Unmanned aerial vehicles joint program.

Source: [10]

3. **AMC/PEO interface.** The most significant ingredient in the AMC to PEO relationship is the fact that the chain of command for AMC originates with the Chief of Staff of the Army while each PEO reports directly to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Research, Development, and Acquisition. The AMC MACOMs provide functional support to the PEO structure for contracting, engineering, cost analysis, test and evaluation, transportation, and quality assurance. While the PEOs maintain a core staff of PMs they contract for functional support from the AMC MACOMs, or buying commands as they are often called. Traditionally a PM will develop a support plan for his/her respective program and, essentially, negotiate a contract, or agreement, with the buying command that has primary responsibility for the commodity group into which the

program is categorized (e.g, PM Abrams Tank will turn to TACOM for support on a developmental tank program). The agreement will then be signed by both the PEO and the Commanding General of the buying command. In the example above the PEO Armored Systems Modernization and the CG TACOM. [10] The PEO-AMC relationship is depicted graphically in Figure 8 below.

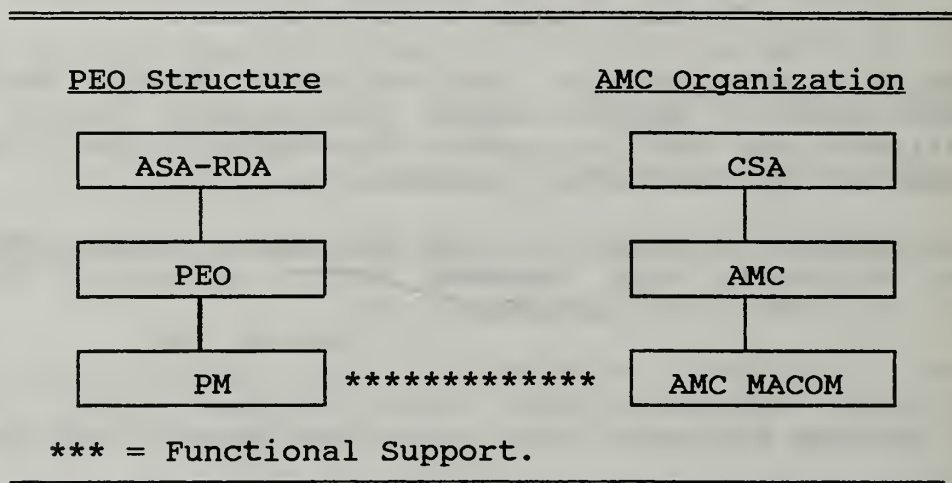


Figure 8. PEO-AMC Relationship. Source: [10]

F. FUNCTIONAL AREA 97 OFFICERS.

The FA 97 Contracting and Industrial Management officer is one of the three functional areas comprising the Army Acquisition Corps. The Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) states that a "'Contracting officer' is a person with the authority to enter into, administer, and/or terminate contracts and make related determinations and findings." [17: p.2-1] The Army describes an FA 97 as an officer that is typically warranted to establish contractual relationships with private contractors and as an officer that is primarily involved in the letting and administering

of the *procurement* end of an acquisition action (as opposed to the requirements generation). The paragraphs below will provide a description of the types of functions/tasks usually performed by FA 97s as well as the kinds of assignments available to FA 97 officers.

1. FA 97 tasks. We turn to the FAR again and find that in identifying the generic responsibilities of a contracting officer it provides the following description.

Contracting officers are responsible for ensuring performance of all necessary actions for effective contracting, ensuring compliance with the terms of the contract, and safeguarding the interests of the United States in its contractual relationships. In order to perform these responsibilities, contracting officers should be allowed wide latitude to exercise business judgment. [17: p.1-8]

The following is a bulletized list of the tasks routinely performed by FA 97s as identified in the Army's manual, Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Utilization.

a) Negotiation and contracting for commodities, facilities, systems, construction, maintenance and services.

b) Analyzing/determining suitability of requests for purchase.

c) Recommending/determining proper procurement and contractual methods.

d) Preparing formal contracts and insuring all Government terms/specifications/legal requirements and restrictions are incorporated and met as appropriate.

e) Initiating/administering invitations for bid, requests for proposal/solicitations to industry.

f) Conducting extensive managerial, industrial and financial capability analyses/evaluations.

g) Awarding, administering, managing and terminating

Government contracts.

h) Conducting technical analyses of contractor manufacturing/production program methods and other associated capabilities.

i) Conducting major systems acquisition "should cost"/"production readiness" reviews prior to contract negotiation and award.

j) Managing government/industrial production activities.

k) Managing quality/product assurance and insuring delivery is in conformance with contractual requirements and specifications.

l) Forecasting procurement program cost/budget.

m) Selecting, formulating and reviewing contract type.

n) Evaluating in process contractual reviews.

o) Implementing/managing analyses of systems/program management and management engineering. [24: pp 5-9]

2. Assignments for FA 97 officers. The following paragraphs are quoted again from the Army's Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Utilization manual and depict the types of assignments in which FA 97 officers can expect to serve in the Army Acquisition Corps.

Command an Army Procurement Agency, Defense Contract Management District (DCMD), Defense Contract Management Area of Operations (DCMAO), Defense Plant Representative Office (DPRO), or be a Project/Product Manager (PM) or serve as a Senior Contracting Official.

Serve as a procurement staff officer, contracting officer, Assistant or Deputy PM, program integrator, fielding officer, or procurement and production control officer, managing and directing procurement and/or production activities at HQDA, U.S. Army Materiel Command (AMC), other Army MACOMs, Joint Duty Assignments or the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA).

Serve as a contract specialist, or contract administrator. [24: p.2]

G. SUMMARY.

This chapter identified the significant events preceding the enactment of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA), the key provisions of the DAWIA itself, the missions and organizational structures of the Army Materiel Command and Program Executive Officer systems, and provided a description of the functions/tasks and assignment types associated with Army FA 97 Contracting and Industrial Management officers.

Taken in the aggregate this chapter purported to establish the groundwork, if you will, for the environment in which the actual thesis research was conducted. In other words, it was in the climate described above, that the attempt was made to ascertain to what extent user experience should play a part in the assignment of FA 97 officers performing the tasks identified above, and serving in the *DAWIA* generated Army Acquisition Corps' billets, located in the Army Materiel Command/Program Executive Officer structure.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. GENERAL.

The two major portions of the research included personal interviews and a survey questionnaire. Chronologically, there were two key interviews that launched the research process, followed by the mailing of the survey questionnaires, and then the conduct of additional personal interviews at Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA). Each of these steps is discussed below.

B. INITIAL PERSONAL INTERVIEWS.

The purpose of the initial interviews was to ascertain whether or not branch coding of FA 97 billets was feasible, and to determine how "receptive" the personnel/policy managers at Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA) were to the notion of a heavier reliance on branch coding. During the initial interviews the then branch chief of the Military Acquisition Management Branch (MAMB), LTC Knight, in PERSCOM, as well MAJ Linehan, an officer assigned to the Director of Acquisition Career Management's (DACM) office were both interviewed.

a) **MAMB.** During this interview LTC Knight warned the author that there might be an element of parochialism present in the FA 97 community due to the fact that, historically, the FA 97 population had been composed of primarily Ordnance and Quartermaster officers and consequently the current population of senior officers (O-5s and O-6s) in the FA 97 community was disproportionately comprised of these types of officers. He felt that there might be some potential for these officers to "skew" their responses to the survey towards a decreased reliance on branch coding in order to "protect" their branch. In other words,

the branch chief thought that non-combat arms officers might "slant" any statements they made in an attempt to "protect" their branch's participation in the AAC.

The most significant upshot of LTC Knight's comments was that the idea of an increased reliance on branch coding FA 97 billets was probably worthwhile but that it would be something that would have to be carefully explored first. He stated that it would not be a simple matter of looking at the branch composition of the population and then coding FA 97 billets to reflect this composition, but would rather have to be an action that was primarily driven by the MACOMs as they were best qualified to identify which specific billets would, or would not, require a branch specific officer. LTC Knight also stated that, in terms of branch coding, the initial MAPL had been built with each MACOM responsible for identifying billets for branch coding. [14]

b) **DACM.** The interview with MAJ Linehan (an O-4/FA 51 officer) in the DACM's office can best be characterized as somewhat hostile to any idea involving a heavier reliance on branch coding of FA 97 billets for Combat Arms, or for any branch for that matter. Major Linehan stated that the author "...should forget your Special Forces experience and pack away your BDUs (Battle Dress Uniform) because anybody can do the job of a Contracting Officer; you don't need operational experience." [15] He stated in no uncertain terms that, in his opinion, anybody can do the job of a contracting officer and that any notion of an increased reliance on branch coding is a "...waste of time." Major Linehan further stated that the requirements document generation is where the most important acquisition work is done because if the requirements

documentation is done correctly the task of the contracting officer is simply to draft and let a contract that fulfills the specific requirements identified in the Statement of Work/Procurement Request. [15]

In short, the initial interviews left a clear impression that there was a significant degree of intransigence at the Headquarters, DA level, and possibly in the field buying/contracting commands.

C. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE.

The survey was conducted in order to objectively measure the level of command preference for user experience on the part of FA 97 officers. The method for selecting the survey recipients (target audience), and constructing the actual questionnaire (survey design) are presented in the following paragraphs.

1. Target Audience. Given the potentially hostile atmosphere, it was decided that the best strategy for conducting the survey would be to determine the level of command preference for user's experience. A critical factor in pursuing this strategy was to preempt any claim of sampling error, or survey variance, by surveying a statistically significant number of senior officers in the Acquisition Corps.

With this strategy in mind, a target audience was selected using Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels (O-5s/O-6s) currently serving in the AAC and including the entire FA 97 population as well as all FA 51s serving in Program Management (PM) or Program Executive Officer (PEO) billets. The latter groups were included so as to gauge the extent to which PMs and PEOs prefer to have a supporting PCO staff that has user familiarity with the Program

equipment (e.g. would a PM for a new helicopter prefer to have a PCO that had operational experience with helicopters).

The starting point for identifying specific survey participants was a PERSCOM provided roster of the 805 O-5s and O-6s currently serving in the Acquisition Corps. Eliminating the FA 53s left 708 FA 97s and FA 51s from which to select the survey audience. A target sample was then built using the following criteria: all FA 97s in CONUS billets, FA 51s in PM billets, and FA 51s in PEO billets. The ultimate target audience consisted of 343 officers that met the criterion above. An attempt was then made to telephonically contact each officer on the list in order to determine their mailing address. Additionally, it was hoped that telephoning each officer before sending the survey would serve to enhance the ultimate response rates for the survey. Of the 343 officers on the initial target audience roster, 175 (51%) were contacted and identified as survey recipients. The 168 officers that did not receive surveys were deleted from the list due to retirement, pending or recent reassignment, an inability to locate/contact the officer, or an unwillingness to participate. Of the 175 surveys mailed out, 75 were sent to FA 97s and 100 were sent to FA 51s. Roughly 75% of recipients responded with 130 completed survey questionnaires being returned to the author. A total of 56 FA 97s and 74 FA 51s responded. A profile of the survey recipients and respondents is illustrated in Figures 9 and 10 on the following page.

2. Survey Sample Size. The question that then posed itself was whether or not the response rate provided a large enough sample so as to mitigate or eliminate any potential claims of sampling

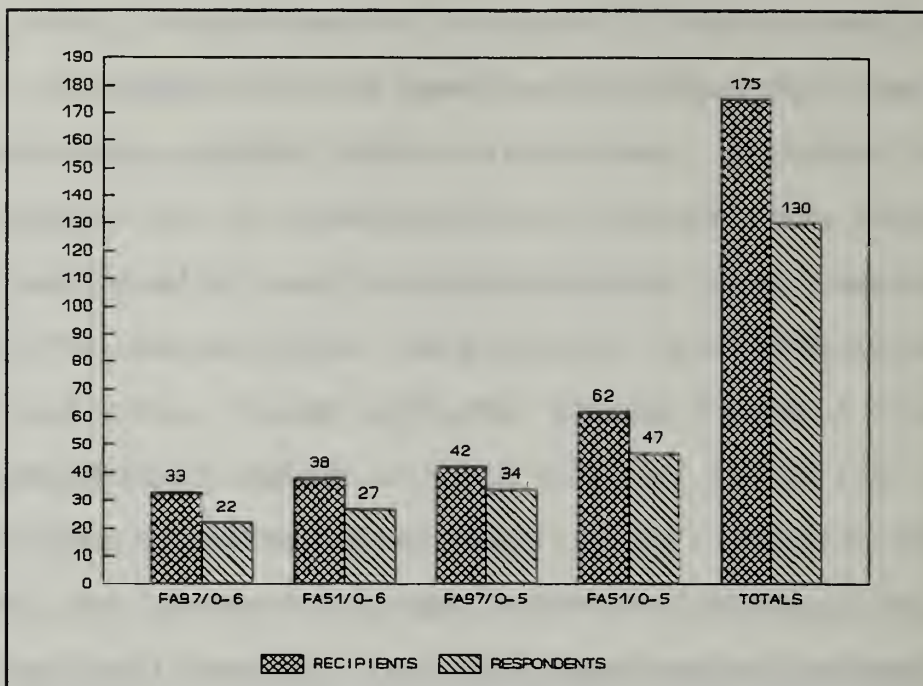


Figure 9. SURVEY RECIPIENTS VS. RESPONDENTS BY RANK/FA.

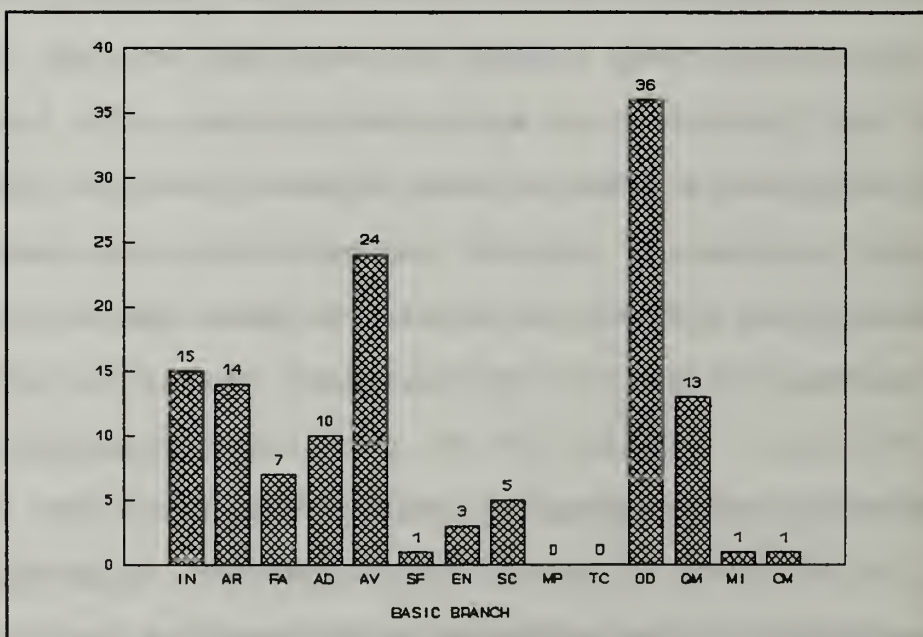


Figure 10. SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY BASIC BRANCH.

error. In other words, the question was whether or not the survey sample was of sufficient size to provide a clear and reliable indication of the responses that would have been given if the

entire AAC population had been surveyed. A college statistics textbook states that "...we will consider sample sizes of 30 or more ($n \geq 30$) large enough...provide an adequate approximation for the probability distribution..." of the sample mean [27: p.363]. The book also provides a procedure by which we can accurately determine the requisite sample size needed to meet a set of predetermined accuracy criteria.

In order to calculate the required size we must use a standard deviation, a preselected maximum allowable error factor, and a predetermined confidence level. In this case the author chose to use the largest standard deviation obtained in any of the nine scaled statements. This was done because the largest standard deviation is indicative of the statement most prone to error and consequently will require the largest sample size in order to achieve the desired confidence level. The maximum allowable error selected was ± 0.25 points from the sample mean, while the confidence level utilized was 95%.

The largest standard deviation obtained (i.e. the statement that drew the widest disparity of responses on the 1 to 5 bar scale), was a standard deviation of 1.1761 on statement 2a. Using this value (1.1761), a 95% confidence level, and a maximum allowable error of ± 0.25 , the calculation yielded a required sample size of 86 respondents. In plain English this means that it takes a sample size of at least 86 respondents to be 95% certain that the true population mean will vary no more than one quarter of a point in either direction of the mean obtained in the sample.

In short, the sample size of 130 is more than adequate to be able to claim that the scores obtained in this survey are reliably


representative of the entire Army Acquisition Corps population of O-5s and O-6s. [27: p.389-393]

3. Survey Design. There were two major concerns in constructing the actual survey questionnaire. The first was to design the survey so as to produce objective results that would allow for statistical analysis. The second was to pose the questions/statements in a manner that would eliminate potential bias in terms of the previously discussed intransigence that the author had been warned about. An ancillary concern was a desire to provide a forum for respondents to provide comments with regards to the topic. A survey questionnaire, as it was mailed to the survey population, is shown at Appendix B.

With these concerns in mind the questionnaire was designed with three major sections. The first was simply general demographical and historical data on the respondent. There were two purposes for this section. The first was to identify the amount of acquisition experience the respondent had so as to ensure that their comments/responses were credible. The second was to facilitate additional statistical analysis of the responses through correlation of responses with rank, basic branch, functional area, time in the acquisition community, or MACOM.

The second section of the survey consisted of scaled responses to a series of statements with which respondents could answer in one of only five ways: strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree. Each possible answer was placed on a bar scale and assigned a value with "strongly disagree" being a "1", through "strongly agree" being a "5". In addition, a block was provided for respondents to check-mark if they made

statements amplifying their scored answer, and a blank space was left at the end of section two for the written comments. The bar scale as it appeared on the questionnaire is shown below.

				2a: REMARKS MADE_____	
1	2	3	4	5	
					
STRONGLY AGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	

Each of the statements were designed with an eye towards characterizing responses as either directly favoring, or disfavoring, the need or preference for user experience. Seven of the nine statements were phrased so that an "agree" type response favored user experience, while, conversely, an "agree" type score on the other two statements disfavored user experience.

The third, and final, section of the questionnaire was composed of a series of five open-ended questions relating to whether or not there should be a heavier emphasis placed on branch coding FA 97 positions. Each question provided the respondent with an opportunity to check a "yes" or "no" block, and/or provide written comments in a blank space that followed each question. The intent was to review the written comments in order to identify any salient themes or ideas that appeared repeatedly.

D. SECOND SET OF INTERVIEWS.

The second set of interviews was conducted during a visit to HQDA subsequent to the initiation of the survey. The purpose of this iteration was to gather background information on how the initial MAPL had been built and to determine how a policy of increased branch coding could be implemented in terms of the mechanics of the actual assignments procedures used by PERSCOM. In

all cases the interviewees were not members of the survey sample. This was intentionally done so as not to "taint" the sample.

E. SUMMARY.

This chapter provided a discussion of the rationale behind the major methods involved in performing the thesis research namely the personal interviews and the survey questionnaires. It briefly identified the purpose and results of the initial interviews and explored the consequences of a heavier reliance branch coding. Additionally, it identified the need for a second set of personal interviews to explore the factors that would be involved in implementing a policy of increased reliance on branch coding. The following chapter will present the summarized results of both sets of interviews as well as the raw data gathered by the survey along with a statistical analysis of said data.

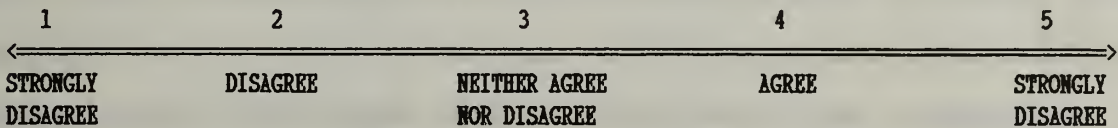
IV. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

A. GENERAL.

The results of the two major research activities, survey questionnaires and personal interviews, are presented in this chapter. A statistical analysis of the questionnaire results is provided along with a synopsis of the interviews.

B. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE.

1. **Scaled Response Data.** The strategy used to accumulate and analyze the scaled responses was to treat each of the nine statements as an independent hypothesis. The bar scale used for each of the statements in this section of the survey is reproduced below for the reader's reference. Each respondent indicated his/her response by circling one of the scores on the bar. The responses were then tallied to determine the mean response for each statement.



There are four primary values reported below for each statement: the mean score; the standard deviation; the P-score; and the 95% confidence range. Using the classical hypothesis approach the "null hypothesis" (H_0) for each statement was that $H_0 = 3.0$, or that respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. The alternative hypothesis (H_a) varied with each statement based on how the answer was interpreted in terms of favoring a preference for user experience. For example, an alternative hypothesis of H_a

> 3.0 would be used for a statement in which a positive answer (i.e. AGREE or STRONGLY AGREE) favored user experience, and conversely, an alternative hypothesis of $H_a < 3.0$ would be used for a statement in which a negative response (i.e. DISAGREE or STRONGLY DISAGREE) favored a preference for user experience. The mean response score of each statement was then evaluated using a P-value decision criterion test which states that if "...the P-value is less than or equal to the specified significance level, then reject the null hypothesis" and accept the alternative hypothesis [27: p.450]. Under the P-value approach a lower P-score indicates a stronger tendency towards the alternative hypothesis. The threshold for deciding at what point to accept or reject the null hypothesis was determined by applying a 5% significance level (corresponding to a 95% confidence level of the mean score accuracy) meaning that the P-score must be less than or equal to .05 in order to accept the alternative hypothesis. The final evaluation reported here is the confidence interval which depicts the range into which we can be 95% confident that the true population mean falls, given the sample size, standard deviation, and a 5% significance level. The chart on the following page depicts the summarized scores for all nine survey statements.

STATEMENT#	MEAN SCORE	STD DEV	P-SCORE	CI RANGE
2a	2.898	1.1761	0.16	2.69-3.10
2a	4.188	0.6845	0.00	4.07-4.31
2d	2.742	1.124	0.005	2.55-2.94
2d	3.929	0.9735	0.00	3.76-4.10
2d	3.555	0.9459	0.00	3.39-3.72
2f	2.820	1.0754	0.00	2.63-3.01
2a	4.188	0.8395	0.00	4.04-4.33
2h	3.281	1.0569	0.01	3.10-3.47
2i	4.578	0.6943	0.00	4.46-4.70

Figure 11: SUMMARIZED SURVEY RESPONSE DATA.

2. Detailed Statement Results. The summarized raw responses to each of the nine statements in section two of the survey questionnaire are provided on the following pages. Each paragraph shows the statement as it appeared on the survey and a graphical depiction of the summarized responses. The mean of the responses, the standard deviation for the scores, the P-score, and the Confidence Interval (CI) range are all repeated below each graph. Additionally the alternative hypothesis (H_a) used for each statement is identified. Finally, a narrative analysis of the statement response results follows each graph. The purpose of the narrative analysis is to describe in words how the author determined the alternative hypothesis that was to be used for each statement. This process essentially boiled down to a "what if..." drill in which the question of "What if the sample says...X?" or "What if the sample says...Y?" was addressed in terms of what the answer would mean with regards to favoring a preference for user

experience. Additionally, the scaled responses plus the respondents' written comments to each statement are analyzed in terms of how they can be interpreted in terms of the hypothesis acceptance/rejection and their impact on favoring or disfavoring a preference for user experience on the part of contracting officers. The written comments are reproduced in their entirety in Appendix C.

a) Statement 2a. *User experience is required on the part of a cognizant contracting officer in order for him/her to effectively perform his/her duties.*

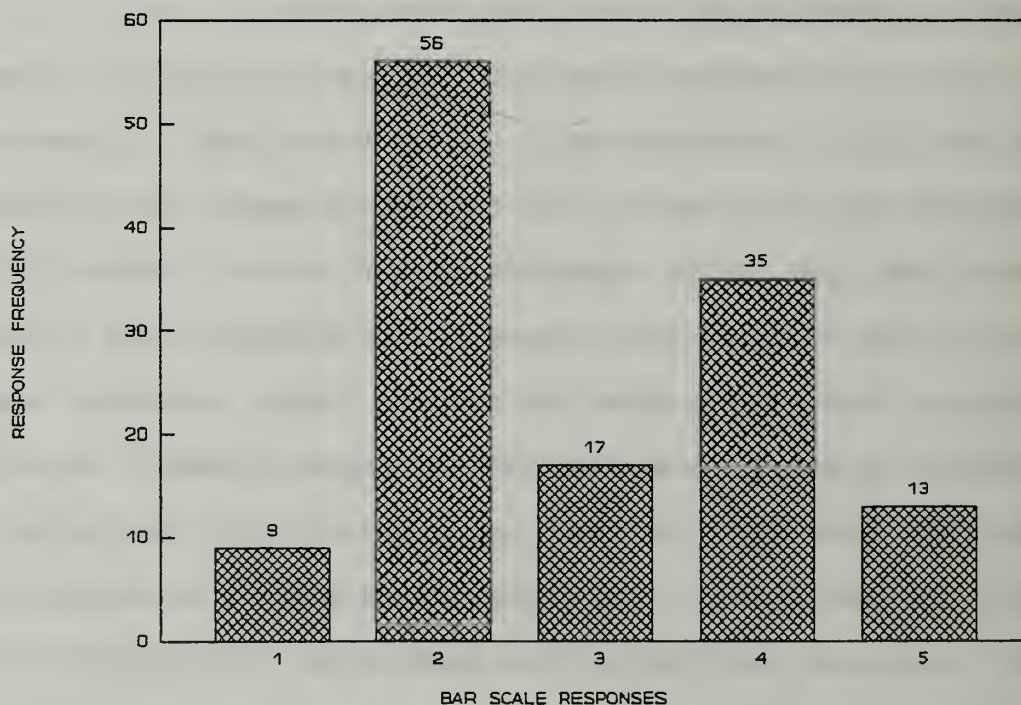


FIGURE 12: RESPONSES TO STATEMENT 2a.

Mean score: 2.898
Standard Deviation: 1.1761
Alternative hypothesis: $H_a > 3.0$

P-Score: 0.16
CI Range: 2.69-3.10

1) Statement 2a narrative analysis. The reason for the selection of alternative hypothesis is somewhat obvious; a positive

response to this statement would clearly favor a requirement for user experience. If the sample agreed that user experience is *required* then we could safely state that there should be a policy of coding billets to facilitate this requirement. If the sample had disagreed then we could move to the next step and attempt to ascertain whether or not there is a *preference* even though there is not a requirement. The P-score, however, exceeds the 0.05 threshold and consequently the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore we must conclude that the AAC population in general would neither agree nor disagree with this statement.

Nineteen respondents provided written remarks with this statement. The comments generally followed the spread of the scaled scores with five neither agreeing or disagreeing, five disagreeing, and nine agreeing. The identifiable thrusts of the comments were that user experience should be defined as any military operational experience as opposed to specific branch-related; and that the issue should be looked at on a "case-by-case (contract-by-contract)" basis.

Based on the relatively even spread of scores across the spectrum the only comment that can safely be made is that there are apparently *mixed emotions* in response to this statement. In other words there is no strong consensus within the AAC population with regards to a *requirement* for user experience on the part of contracting officers.

b. Statement 2b. *User experience would enhance the effectiveness of a cognizant contracting officer although it is not absolutely required.*

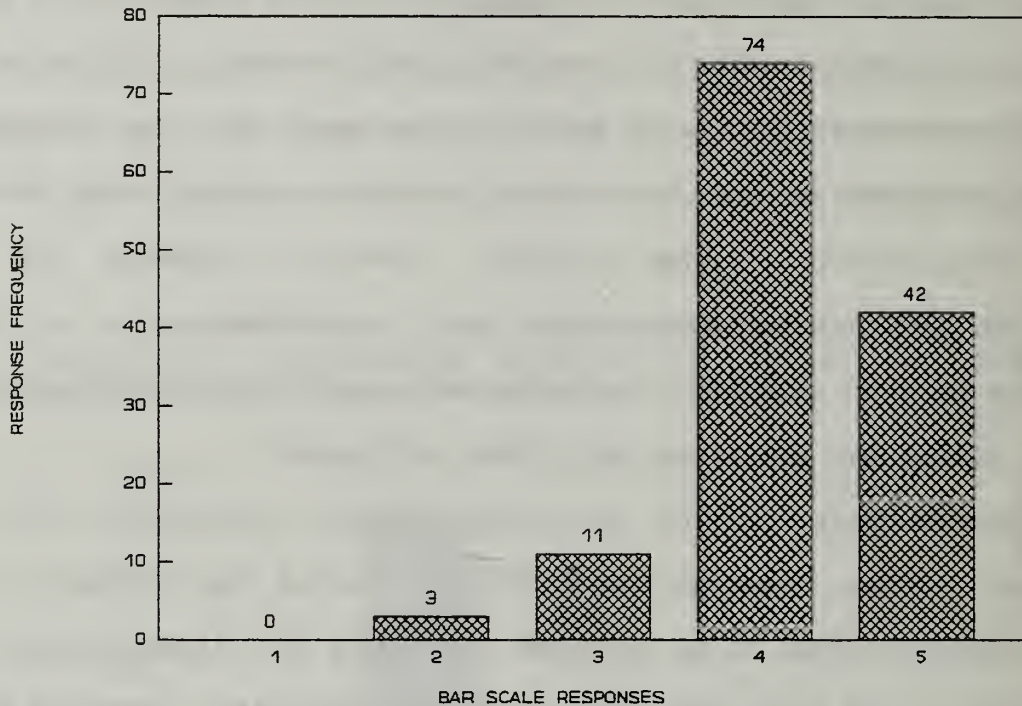


FIGURE 13: RESPONSES TO STATEMENT 2b.

Mean score: 4.188

Standard Deviation: 0.6845

Alternative hypothesis: $H_a > 3.0$

P-Score: 0.00

CI Range: 4.07-4.31

1) Statement 2b narrative analysis. The alternative hypothesis shown was chosen because a positive response to this statement was viewed as favorable to a preference for user experience. The thinking behind the statement construction was that if respondents generally agreed with the statement, then the argument could be made that if it (user experience) enhances effectiveness it should be preferred. The assumption here was that any organization will want to establish procedures/policies that will enhance organizational effectiveness. If, on the other hand,

the majority of respondents had disagreed we would have to conclude that there ought not be any requirement for user experience in coding contracting officer billets as the implication would be that user experience actually has a detrimental impact on the effectiveness of a contracting officer. In this case the P-score is well under the threshold and the null hypothesis is rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis.

A review of the eight written comments shows that all were provided by respondents who either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. The major themes of the written comments was that while user experience was not required it is certainly beneficial and that it goes a long way towards enhancing the credibility of the contracting officer with the PM shop. Additionally, one officer stated that the level of need for user experience, "...while not in all cases necessary" it "...would be highly desirable in some, and critical in others." In other words the level of need for user experience will vary from billet to billet within a command and that a "...a balance within an organization would be best."

Based on the low P-score, the relatively high mean score of almost 4.2 (almost 1.2 points beyond the "agree" level of 3.1), and the thrust of the written comments, we can readily make the comment that there is a strong consensus within the AAC population in terms of agreeing that a contracting officer can better perform his/her duties if he/she has prior operational experience with the types of supplies and services that are being procured.

c. **Statement 2c.** A contracting officer from another service (i.e. a Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps contracting officer) would be just as effective serving in an Army buying command billet, as would be an Army FA 97 officer.

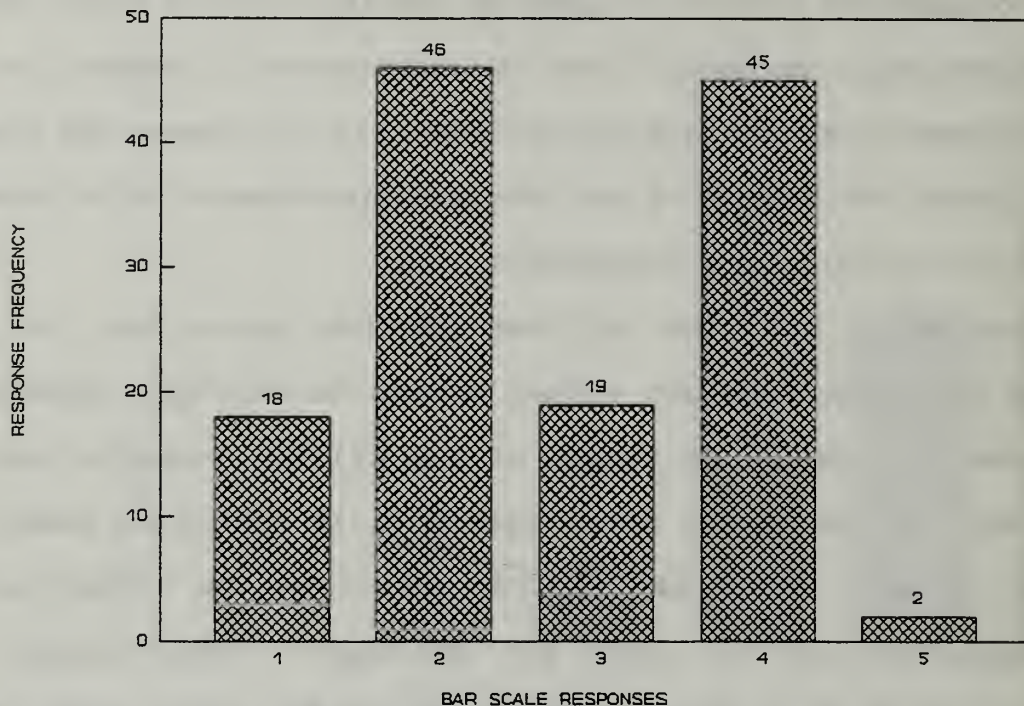


FIGURE 14: RESPONSES TO STATEMENT 2c.

Mean score: 2.742

P-score: 0.005

Standard Deviation: 0.9735

CI Range: 2.55-2.94

Alternative hypothesis: $H_a < 3.0$

1) **Statement 2c narrative analysis.** The alternative hypothesis was chosen because a negative response was viewed as favorable to a preference for user experience. The rationale was that if the sample disagreed with this statement then we could infer that, at least at the Service level, there exists a preference for user experience. The reverse of this rationale was that, if the sample agreed, we would have to infer that, even at the Service level, there is no preference for any kind of user experience. The P-score on this statement is below the requisite 0.05 and we accept the alternative over the null hypothesis. This

acceptance is mitigated by the fact that the mean score is only 0.26 points below the "disagree" level of 2.9, as well as the fact that when we look at the graphical breakdown it is readily apparent that a large number of respondents agreed with the statement.

The pattern of the written comments tends to support the "reduction" of the level of confidence with which we can rely on the findings here. Fifteen comments were provided with six disagreeing, two neither agreeing or disagreeing, and seven agreeing. The general theme of the modifying statements was that while on the one hand service peculiar procedures are important, the quality of the individual (as opposed to his/her service) and an intimate working knowledge of the Federal Acquisition Regulations are equally as important. In addition several respondents commented that the use of joint service contracting officers has worked in the past and therefore there is nothing "wrong" with it.

Although we can conclude that the AAC population in general disagrees with the statement, it must be pointed out that the level of consensus on the issue can only be characterized as weak.

d. Statement 2d. When a contracting officer has user experience with a proposed item it facilitates the preparation of requirements documents (i.e. Statements of Work/Bid Packages).

[SEE FIGURE 15 ON FOLLOWING PAGE]

Mean score: 3.929

P-Score: 0.00

Standard Deviation: 0.9735

CI Range: 3.76-4.10

Alternative hypothesis: $H_a > 3.0$

1) Statement 2d narrative analysis. A positive response was viewed as favorable to a preference for user experience which

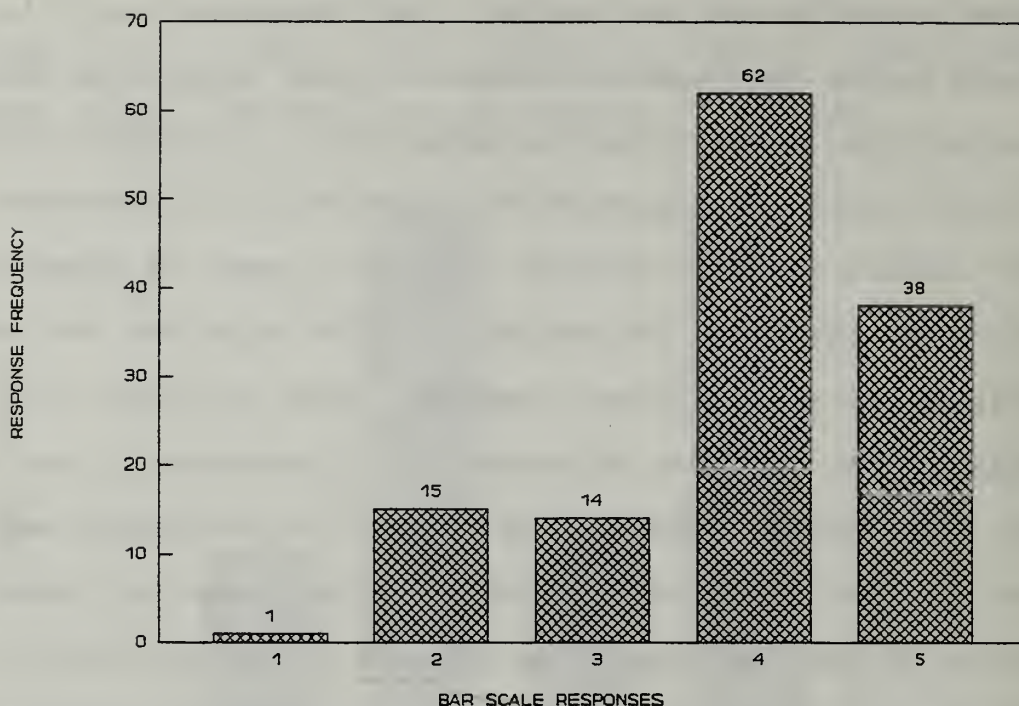


FIGURE 15: RESPONSES TO STATEMENT 2d.

resulted in the selection of the alternative hypothesis as shown. If we could conclude, based on a positive sample response, that user experience facilitates preparation of requirements documentation then we could make the statement that there ought to be a preference for user experience. The P-score is below the threshold for null rejection and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

The statement can safely be made that within the AAC population of O-5s and O-6s there is a strong consensus of opinion with regards to agreeing that user experience facilitates the pre-award activities associated with the generation of requirements documentation. Reviewing the written comments, however, mitigates this statement somewhat.

Twelve statements were provided and the readily identifiable

recurring notion in both the positive, as well as negative, statements was that contracting officers do not get involved in the preparation of requirements documents. The PCO role is more one of reviewing already prepared documents in order to prepare contract solicitations. This tends to reduce the relative importance of the specific findings with regards to this statement as it will ultimately play a lesser role in resolving the question of whether or not contracting officer user experience should be a factor in assigning officers to billets in buying commands.

In other words, although there is a consensus on this statement (albeit weak), in the end it won't much matter because, regardless of the level of user experience, contracting officers are a "non-factor" in the preparation of requirements documentation because they don't see them until the documents are already completed and hence they (contracting officers) have a minimal impact on the process.

e. Statement 2e. *It is safe to say that in the acquisition community there is a desire for contracting officer user experience, but not necessarily a need for this type of operational experience.*

[SEE FIGURE 16 ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE]

Mean score: 3.555

P-Score: 0.00

Standard Deviation: 0.9459

CI Range: 3.39-3.72

Alternative hypothesis: $H_a > 3.0$

1) Statement 2e narrative analysis. The reasoning behind the alternative hypothesis selection should be relatively self-explanatory. A positive response was viewed as favorable because we would be able to conclude that, in terms of *preference*, there is a consensus favoring it. Based on the P-score being well below the

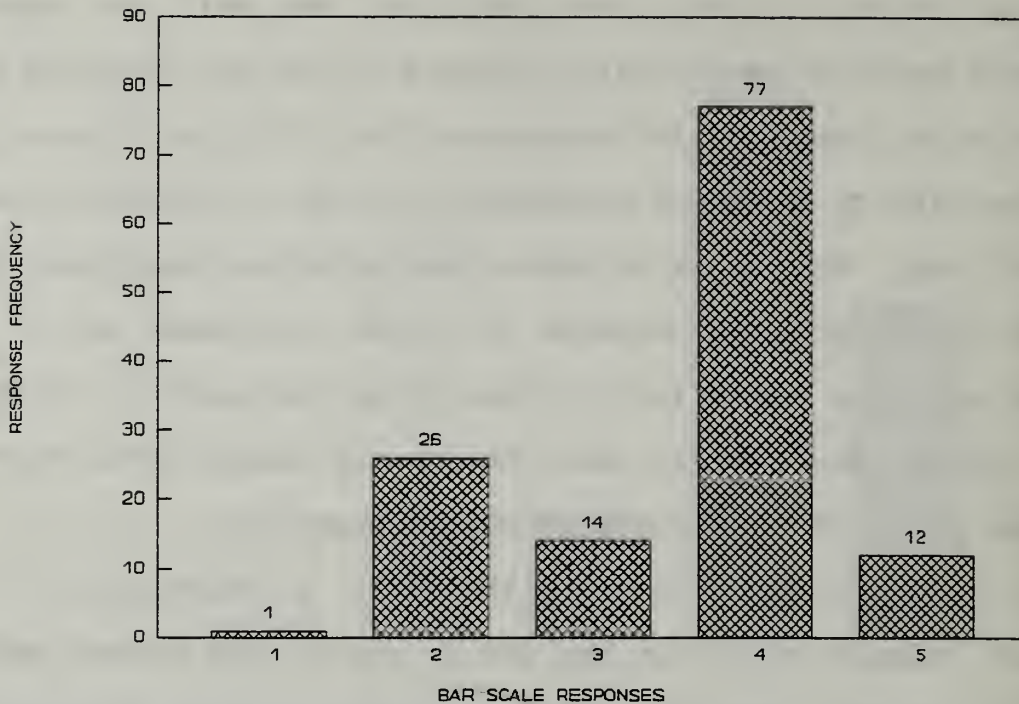


FIGURE 16: RESPONSES TO STATEMENT 2e.

0.05 threshold we accept the alternative hypothesis.

This statement can be described as somewhat of a hybrid of the first two statements in this section in that the *desire* portion stems from the belief that user experience makes a contracting officer more effective (statement 2b), while the *need* portion refers to the requirement portion of statement 2a. The findings tend to support the statement that within the AAC population there does in fact exist a desire for contracting officer user experience. Since the mean score exceeds the agree threshold by only 0.55 points the statement must be made that there is only a moderate level of agreement with this statement. The five written comments that were provided (one agree, one neither, and three disagree) were too few and somewhat innocuous to allow for any meaningful analysis.

f. Statement 2f. By the time a procurement action reaches the PCO level, the requirements definition is specific enough to preclude a requirement for the contracting officer's user familiarity with the item.

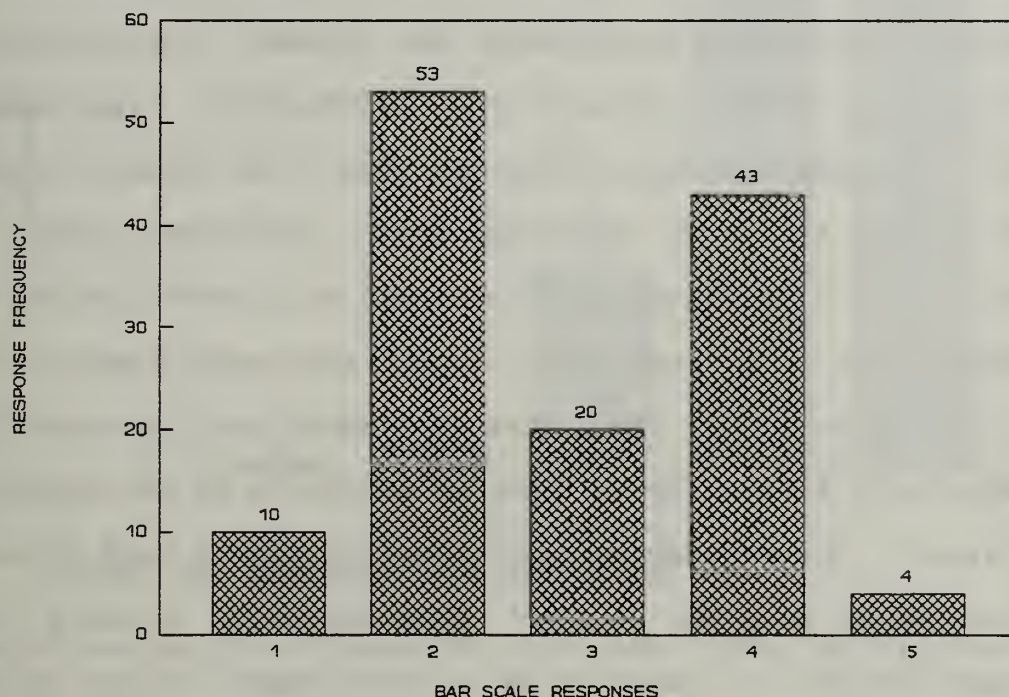


FIGURE 17: RESPONSES TO STATEMENT 2f.

Mean score: 2.820

Standard Deviation: 1.0754

Alternative hypothesis: $H_a < 3.0$

P-Score: 0.03

CI Range: 2.63-3.01

1) Statement 2f narrative analysis. The alternative hypothesis was selected because a negative response was viewed as favorable to a preference for user experience. The thought process behind the construction of the statement was that if the requirements definition were specific enough then there would be no need for user experience because user experience would provide no "value added" and could then be characterized as frivolous. Alternately, if the requirements definition were not specific enough, then the PCO's user experience would prove to be beneficial

to the procurement process and the requirement for his/her user experience could then be described as a necessary factor in the successful completion of a procurement action. Consequently a left-tailed alternative hypothesis was chosen. The P-score is below the 0.05 threshold and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Because the mean score is only 0.28 points below the disagree level we must conclude that, although there is a consensus, it is a relatively weak one and it is worth noting that, with regards to this statement, there are many people in the general population that feel that a contracting officer's user experience is of little import once an action is at the contracting officer level. The written comments (twelve total) tend to support this claim with the two "agree" type comments stating that a procurement action is essentially a "done deal" by the time the contracting staff becomes involved; and the ten "disagree" type basically stating that, although it is not essential, another "set of eyes" can't hurt.

g. Statement 2g. It has always been helpful for newly assigned FA 97 officers to familiarize themselves with the items being procured by their new command.

[SEE FIGURE 18 ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE]

Mean score: 4.188

P-Score: 0.00

Standard Deviation: 0.8395

CI Range: 4.04-4.33

Alternative hypothesis: $H_a > 3.0$

1) Statement 2g narrative analysis. The alternative hypothesis was chosen because a positive response was deemed to be favorable to a requirement for user experience. In this case the specific rationale was that if the consensus is that FA 97 officers

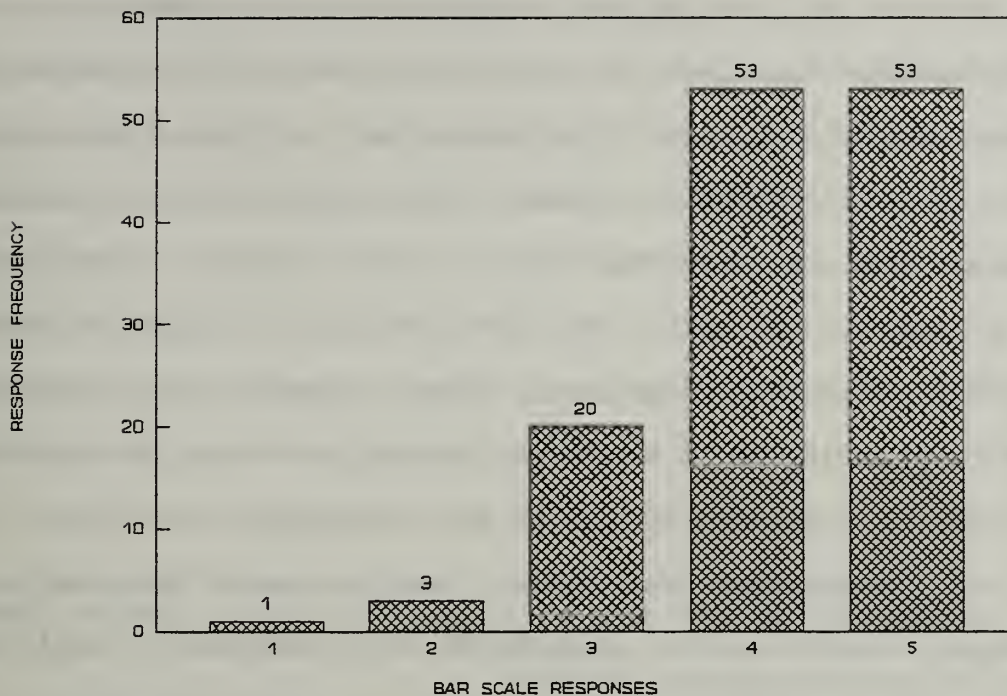


FIGURE 18: RESPONSES TO STATEMENT 2g.

should familiarize themselves with the items being acquired this implies that user experience is being introduced "post-assignment", if you will. In other words, we could conclude that it is helpful for officers to gain user familiarity after they are assigned to the buying command. This would allow for the premise that officers with operational experience gained through previous assignments in their basic branch would already possess some level of familiarity with the types of equipment being procured by the command. For example, an aviation officer serving in an assignment with ATCOM would already be intimately familiar with helicopters and helicopter systems while a non-aviation officer would not. The P-score is well below the 0.05 level and the alternative hypothesis is accepted over the null. Because of the relatively high point spread from the agree threshold (1.19 points over 3.0), it is safe

to say that the AAC population in general believes that contracting officers should take the time to become familiar with the supplies that they will be involved in procuring. A quick look at the graphics makes it readily apparent that the level of consensus on this issue can be characterized as very strong. The written comments generally support the statistical findings in that all three state primarily the same thing; namely that contracting officer familiarity with the items being purchased is critical if the officer is to be effective in performing his/her job.

h. Statement 2h. *The items procured by each of the "buying commands" in AMC are generally of such a nature that the operational users of the equipment or items will fall within specific Career Management Fields.*

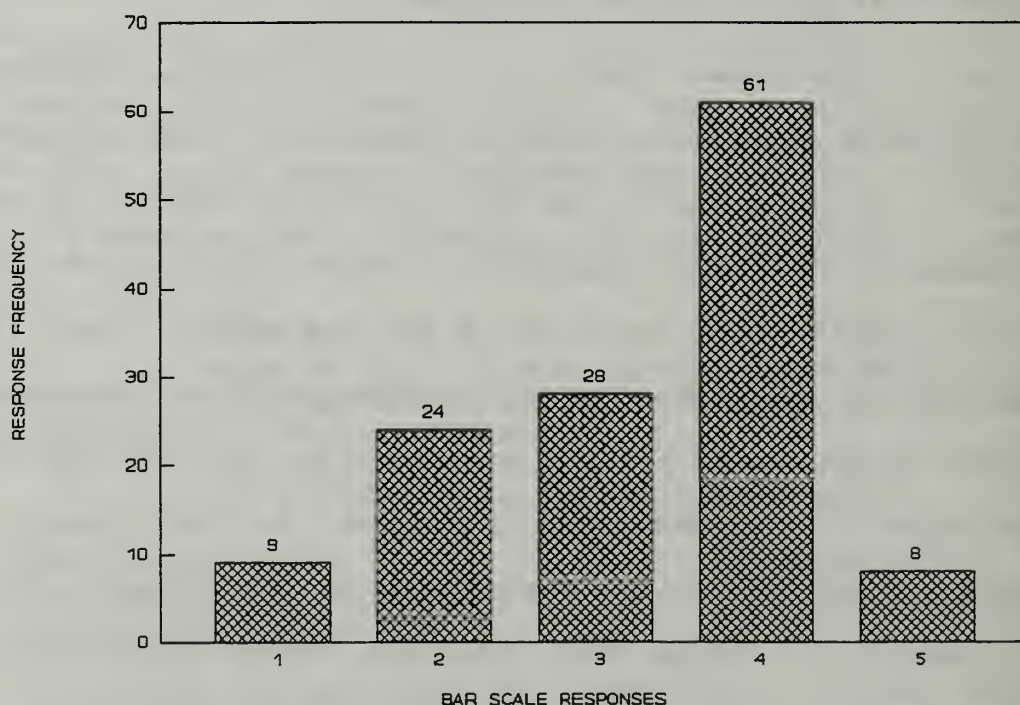


FIGURE 19: RESPONSES TO STATEMENT 2h.

Mean score: 3.281
Standard Deviation: 1.0569
Alternative hypothesis: $H_a > 3.0$

P-Score: 0.001
CI Range: 3.10-3.47

1) Statement 2h narrative analysis. The intent of this statement was to ascertain whether or not a relationship existed between AMC organization and branch type. A positive response could be taken to imply that branch coding AMC billets could be accomplished along AMC commodity lines. The alternative is accepted based on the P-score being below the threshold. Taking the picture presented by the graph together with the fact that the mean only exceeds the agree level by 0.28 points it is clear that the level of agreement with this statement can only be characterized as moderate. In other words it appears that the AAC population as a whole somewhat agrees, but not wholeheartedly, with the idea that there is an identifiable relationship between the items bought in buying commands and the soldiers that will operationally use them. The written comments provide clear insight into the source of this moderation.

A total of eighteen comments were provided and, regardless of whether they disagreed or agreed, almost all of the statements essentially said the same thing. Specifically they said that this statement, as it is presented in the survey, is too general because each of the buying commands' products are ultimately used by a wide variety of soldiers in the field. For example, TACOM buys trucks/wheeled vehicles that are put to use by all soldiers, or radios purchased by CECOM are not restricted to any identifiable CMF or grouping of CMFs.

One comment by the researcher is appropriate at this juncture. In retrospect, the research results may have been better served by

attempting to couch this statement in terms of the "primacy of knowledge", or expertise, associated with the development and procurement of a piece of equipment. Using a radio, which is operationally used by all soldiers, as an example, the primacy of expertise will clearly reside with a Signal Corps officer. A good analogy may have been that while people all look at a watch to tell the time, very few can provide detailed information on how to *build* a clock. The bottom line, however, is that due to the nebulous nature of this statement the results will be of little value in addressing the primary focus of the thesis.

i. Statement 2i. *One of the purposes of having a uniformed presence in the Acquisition Corps is to bring operational expertise to the acquisition community.*

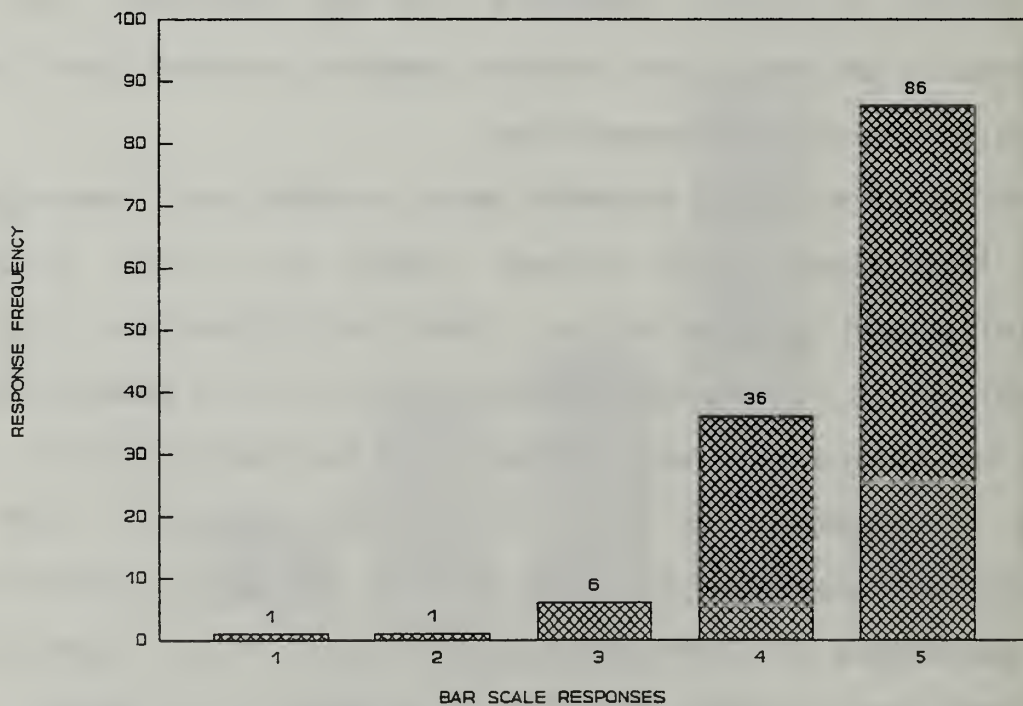


FIGURE 20: RESPONSES TO STATEMENT 2i.

Mean score: 4.578
 Standard Deviation: 0.6943
 Alternative hypothesis: $H_a > 3.0$

P-Score: 0.00
 CI Range: 4.46-4.70

1) Statement 2i narrative analysis. The P-score is well below the threshold and the null is rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis. Based on the extremely high mean score (which is abundantly clear in the graph), we can conclude that there is an overwhelming consensus throughout the AAC population with regards to the idea that uniformed officers are in the Acquisition Corps to utilize their previously developed user experience.

There were fourteen written comments to this statement which were all "agree" type with the exception of one officer who neither agreed nor disagreed because, as he put it, the number of uniformed FA 97s is too small in relation to the total Acquisition Corps to have a marked influence. The remaining thirteen comments were all overwhelmingly positive in terms of agreeing with the statement. Five respondents stated that, in their estimation, the biggest contribution of the uniformed members of the AAC was a sense of urgency and the leadership/management skills inherent in commissioned officers.

In general it can be said that the overall "flavor" of the comments here were more related to the introduction and maintenance of a *military atmosphere* within the acquisition community as opposed to specific user or operational experience that is traceable to branch affiliation. Additionally, it must be pointed out that as the statement is worded it can be taken to include not only FA 97s, but *all* officers serving in the Acquisition Corps.

3. Open-ended Question Results. The summarized responses from each of the open-ended questions in the survey are presented

below. The first three questions asked respondents to check a "YES" or "NO" block and then provide written comments if so desired. The last two questions simply asked respondents to provide written answers.

The analysis for each of the first three questions presents the summarized numbers of yes and no "checks" along with the numbers of comments made that correspond to each followed by a narrative analysis of the respondents' comments with the emphasis being to identify any consensus among the comments. It should be noted here that in the numbers shown for the summarized responses they do not add up to the 130 total of the sample due to the fact that many respondents who answered "no" to question 3a felt it unnecessary to answer the subsequent two questions. The analysis for the last two questions (numbers four and five), consists of a summary of the types of responses given along with a discussion of the salient comments made. All of the written comments are reproduced in their entirety in Appendix D.

a. Question 3a. Should there be a heavier reliance on branch coding for all FA 97 positions? In other words should more FA 97 billets be coded for a specific branch or branch type (e.g. Combat Arms or Combat Support)?

YES: 50
YES COMMENTS: 8

NO: 80
NO COMMENTS: 22

1) Narrative analysis. Of the twenty-two "No" comments the predominant reasons given were that other branches were "just as capable" as Combat Arms; that a basic understanding of how the Army in general operates in the field is more important than branch specificity; that the job just doesn't require it (user

experience); and one officer stated that a contracting officer may lose his objectivity if he is too closely associated with an item because of branch background. The consensus among the "Yes" comments was that a heavier reliance on branch coding should depend on each specific position based on the level of product/item expertise needed; and that user experience enhances the contracting officer's credibility with the customer (i.e. the PM shop). One particular comment to note came from an officer that did not mark either yes or no and stated that "It doesn't matter-I tried to do this as a young Captain in 1979" and that PERSCOM's policy was to assign officers based only on the first two digits of a billet code (e.g. 97A18), and that the "trailer specialty code" was essentially irrelevant.

b. Question 3b. *If you feel there should be a heavier reliance on branch coding should this reliance vary by grade? In other words should entry level positions (O-3 or O-4) be branch immaterial while critical positions (O-5 or O-6) be branch coded?*

YES: 27
YES COMMENTS: 10

NO: 85
NO COMMENTS: 23

1) Narrative analysis. The overwhelming theme in all of the written responses to this question (21 of 33 comments) revolved around the belief that this question should be just the opposite. In other words respondents felt that it is more important for entry level positions to be branch coded than it is for senior officers. The major reason given was that senior officers must be more broad-based in their approach to their duties while junior officers will be more heavily involved in the "details" of the procurement process and are still intimately

familiar with the current branch related environment from which they just came. Several respondents again iterated that branch coding decisions should be made based on the specific needs of the MACOM and the MACOM should make those decisions.

c. Question 3c. If you feel there should be a heavier reliance on branch coding should this reliance vary by MACOM or duty position? In other words should DLA (DCMAO or DPRO) positions be branch immaterial while AMC (buying command) billets be branch coded?

YES: 41
YES COMMENTS: 5

NO: 70
NO COMMENTS: 17

1) Narrative analysis. Once again a recurring theme (9 respondents) is that any decision regarding branch coding a billet must be made by each individual organization and that both DLA and AMC billets may require branch-specific experience but that that was a decision that only the organization could make. Examples of comments included: "The specific organization is better able to determine the coding..." needs, or "...decision should be based on duties, not MACOM...", and "each job will need to be evaluated on its own merits and requirements."

d. Question 4. Have you ever encountered a situation where a lack of user experience on the part of the contracting officer had a detrimental effect on a procurement action? Please explain below.

In response to this question twenty-seven officers provided specific examples of situations where they felt a lack of user experience adversely affected a procurement action. The majority of these respondents felt that a PCO with specific user experience would have prevented this adversity. Fourteen respondents' comments generally took the form of "no, but it helps..." in that

they had never encountered any situation like this but felt that user experience would always be helpful in all circumstances. Twelve did not provide specific examples but expressed concern over a demonstrated lack of urgency or empathy on the part of civilian contracting officers/specialists and attributed this to a lack of military/field experience. Roughly half a dozen officers stated that there should never be a problem of the type specified in the question because there is adequate availability of knowledgeable technical/engineering staff in the PM shop/matrix organization to resolve any issues that surface with regards to detailed equipment questions. Finally, it must be pointed out that almost half of the respondents put nothing down which can be taken to imply that they have never seen any situations where a lack of user experience on the part of a contracting officer became a negative factor in the action. The bottom line here is that, other than what appears to be isolated incidents (based on the relatively few provided), the impression we can come away with is that the lack of user experience on the part of contracting officers has not had a detrimental impact on procurement actions in the past.

e. Question 5. *Which, if any, of the various Army buying commands would benefit by having uniformed contracting officers that have prior user, or operational, experience in terms of the predominant types of items, equipment, or commodities that the command is responsible for procuring?*

The summarized responses to this question are presented in Figure 21 on the following page. Roughly 43% of respondents said

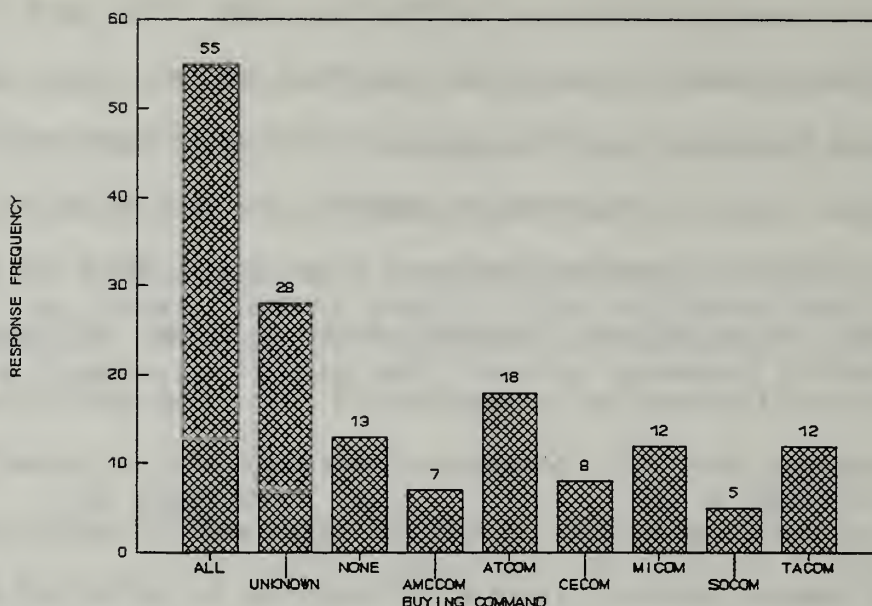


FIGURE 21: RESPONSES TO QUESTION 5.

all buying commands would benefit, almost 22% (21.5) said they couldn't answer or didn't know, and 10% said none would benefit. In addition many respondents identified specific commands that they felt would benefit by having contracting officers with user experience. In short we can conclude that the majority of respondents felt that all, or at least some, of the AMC buying commands would be better served with the assignment of contracting officers possessive of prior operational experience with the types of items the command procures.

C. PERSONAL INTERVIEWS.

1. General. Representatives from each of the following agencies were questioned by the author: the office of the Army Deputy Chief of Staff, Personnel (DCSPER); the FA 97 assignments office at the Army Personnel Command (PERSCOM); the FA 97 Proponency office of the Army Contracting Support Agency (CSA); and

the Personnel office at Headquarters, Army Materiel Command (AMC). The interviews were conducted during a visit to the HQDA area by the author concurrent with the conduct of the survey. The purpose was to determine what procedures had been employed in building the initial MAPL and to identify what steps would have to be taken, mechanistically, if a policy of increased reliance on branch coding were to be implemented. The results of each interview are summarized below.

a) DCSPER. This interview took place with MAJ Brown who was the Acquisition Corps liaison to the DCSPER's office. The Major had also previously served as the branch chief of the MAMB. He identified three divergent factors, in terms of branch coding FA 97 billets, that came into play in the early stages of the Army Acquisition Corps. The first was the desires of the MACOM. In other words the overriding factor in creating the original MAPL was the requests of the individual MACOMs. The second was the ability of the basic branches to "give up" bodies to the AAC. There was essentially a "negotiation process" that took place between the MAMB and the individual branches with regards to the extent to which the branches could "lose" officers to the AAC. Branches that were already critically short on officers (e.g. Military Intelligence, Finance) were required to provide less officers to the AAC relative to overstrength branches (e.g. Infantry, or any other Combat Arm). The final element which was, as MAJ Brown described it, less overt than the other two, was the ability of the FA 97 to establish credibility with the customer, or user

community. He stated that an officer with branch specific experience would have more immediate credibility than an officer without branch specific experience in dealing with PM shops, contractors, or Combat Development Center (CDC) personnel in the branch "schoolhouses" (e.g. the Armor CDC at Fort Knox, KY, or the Infantry CDC at Fort Benning, GA). [3]

b) **PERSCOM.** Two officers were interviewed in this case; CPT Carroll, the Captains assignments officer in the FA 97 branch of the Military Acquisition Management Branch (MAMB), and MAJ Carson who was preparing to take over CPT Carroll's job as the assignments officer. Their job was to manage the actual assignment process of all FA 97 Captains entering the Acquisition Corps Army-wide. The gist of their comments was that CPT Carroll was opposed to an increased reliance on branch coding for two main reasons. First, in his estimation, it was just not necessary because the functional tasks associated with an FA 97 were generic enough to preclude branch affiliated expertise. Second, officers were not assessed into the AAC based on branch-coded billets. He said that the MAPL had not been built using branch coded positions and consequently officers were not brought into the AAC specifically to fill branch coded slots. The result, if an attempt was made to emphasize branch coding, in CPT Carroll's opinion, would be a lack of continuity between the accession process and the assignment process and a very unmanageable personnel management system. Both said that for a system involving a heavier reliance on branch coding to be made to work, the accession process would have to be

"needs-based" in that officers would have to be assessed specifically based on the branch coding of the MAPL. For example, if there were ten Signal Corps billets on the MAPL then, during the accession process, ten Signal Corps officers would have to be brought in to fill those slots. The problem associated with managing a system like this would be that officers have to be "grown" to fill senior level billets and, under a branch coded system, it is very difficult to forecast the "growth" rate of officers within specific "branch tracks". For example, under the current system the FA 97 population is required to "grow" roughly 60 Colonels regardless of branch. Under a branch coded system PERSCOM might have to grow the same 60 Colonels except that there would need to be a certain number in each branch.

Captain Carroll stated that assigning an officer for his/her initial AAC tour in a position related to their branch makes for a smoother, and easier transition from the "operational Army" to the Acquisition Corps. Finally both MAJ Carson and CPT Carroll both said that the current PERSCOM policy is to assign officers to billets based on the first two digits of the position code. For example a typical billet code will look like "97A00" or "97A11" where the 97A identifies a FA 97 officer and the 00 or 11 indicates a branch immaterial and Infantry officer respectively. According to both officers when they receive a request for an officer they will attempt to make the assignment to meet the "trailer specialty" (i.e. the second two digits) but that the bottom line is they are only *required* to make the assignment based on the first two digits.

[4] [5]

c) CSA. The representative from the Army Contracting Support Agency was LTC Adams, the Chief of the FA 97 Proponency Office. The Proponency Office is responsible for the development of policies pertaining to the utilization of FA 97 officers. LTC Adams stated that the purpose of FA 97s is to provide Army experience and a sense of urgency to the Acquisition Corps vice any specific operational experience, although he agreed that having a contracting officer that does have branch affiliation with the equipment being procured is certainly helpful but not a prerequisite. He had specific concerns with a heavier reliance on branch coding because he fears that if we "sub-optimize" the AAC we run the risk of over specializing and reducing our general flexibility within the AAC. Additionally he stated that by the time an officer in the AAC gets to the O-5/O-6 level his/her specific operational knowledge is outdated and non-current thus mitigating any potential benefit that could have been provided by the officer. [1]

d) AMC. The acting chief of the Army Acquisition Corps Management Office, HQ AMC, Mr. Bartholo, was interviewed in order to determine what role AMC had played in the buying commands' requests for positions during the development of the initial MAPL. Specifically he was asked what guidance had been issued by AMC to the MACOMs in terms of branch coding the uniformed FA 97 positions. He said that there had been no guidance issued regarding any instructions in terms of branch coding but that the MACOMs had

essentially been told they had a free hand in terms of what they could request. In other words, according to Mr. Bartholo, the MACOMs could have asked for anything they wanted to include an increased (or decreased) number of uniformed FA 97 billets that were coded for a specific branch or branch type. [2]

D. SUMMARY.

In this chapter the survey data were presented along with an analysis of the data. The summarized results of each of the survey questions were provided along with a narrative interpretation of what the results mean in terms of favoring or disfavoring a preference for user experience. Finally, the summaries of the personal interviews were presented. The question now becomes one of identifying the implications of these results vis-a-vis the current MAPL and the existing FA 97 assignments process.

Based on the survey results it is clear that user/operational experience enhances the effectiveness of a cognizant contracting officer (survey statement 2b); that there is a strong desire within the acquisition community for contracting officers to possess user experience or for them to gain this sort of familiarity after being assigned to a buying command (statements 2e and 2g respectively); and that user experience facilitates the processing of requirements documentation by better enabling contracting officers to review the documents and incorporate the requirements accurately into a solicitation, bid package, or the actual contract itself. Additionally, question 5 indicates that most of the community believes that all of the AMC MACOMs would benefit by having

assigned contracting officers with user experience.

There are still several issues that must be addressed in further detail. While the data clearly show there is an overwhelming belief that user experience in general enhances the effectiveness of a contracting officer (statement 2b), the data just as clearly show that, pragmatically, there are some significant concerns as to how user experience could, or should, be utilized in terms of the branch coding of FA 97 billets (question 3a). Another issue is the need to expand on the results from statement 2h in which an attempt was made to determine if a relationship exists between the CMFs and the AMC commodity organizations. A third issue remaining to be discussed is the resolution of the general versus specific military experience identified in statement 2i. The final issue stems from the current PERSCOM assignment policy as identified during the second set of interviews. In the following chapter these issues will be discussed in detail.

V. DISCUSSION

A. GENERAL.

This chapter resolves the anomalies, or unresolved issues, alluded to in the previous chapter. Specifically it focuses on four issues that the author feels must be addressed before closing the thesis. The first is the apparent dichotomy created between statement 2b in which respondents strongly state that user experience enhances the effectiveness of a contracting officer; and question 3a in which the majority of respondents state that there should not be an increased reliance on branch coding. In short, we seem to have answers that directly contradict each other. The second is the relatively weak findings on statement 2h regarding the relationship between CMF types and the equipment types bought by each of the AMC buying commands. The third issue revolves around the question of "general" versus "specific" operational experience identified in statement 2i on the survey. Finally, the fourth issue concerns the current PERSCOM policy regarding the officer assignment procedure. Each of these issues is discussed in detail.

B. CONTRACTING OFFICER EFFECTIVENESS VERSUS AN INCREASED RELIANCE ON BRANCH CODING.

On the one hand, there is almost universal agreement that user experience enhances a contracting officer's effectiveness (statement 2b). On the other hand, there is a strong consensus of opinion that there should *not* be an increased reliance on branch coding (question 3a). How do we interpret these seemingly contradictory positions? A review of the statistical analysis on

statement 2b, along with a review of the modifying comments, shows that the findings with respect to this statement alone are inarguable. Why, then, wouldn't anyone want to branch code billets to ensure assignment of officers that already possess operational user experience if it is already a foregone conclusion that it would enhance the effectiveness of the officer? By turning to the written responses to question 3a we can find several possible explanations for this phenomenon.

The most common reason given for a negative response was that user experience just isn't necessary; that "you don't need operational experience"; and that an officer from a non-related branch is just as capable. The author's counter to this is that the question here isn't one of need, it is a question of want. There is, fundamentally, a big difference between the two. It appears that those respondents answering "no" to question 3a interpreted the question as "do we have to have..." or "does there need to be..." an increased reliance, when in fact the question says "should." This interpretation would tend to mitigate, or alleviate, the contradictory appearance between the two items and inclines one towards acceptance of the results of item 2b.

A second possible cause of the negative responses to 3a surfaces in several comments (which, in actuality represent a recurring theme throughout the survey). They concerned the belief that each organization must decide whether or not a position should be branch coded, as opposed to a HQDA level coding of billets. In other words, a number of respondents felt that the decision to

specify, or not specify, a branch requirement will vary from position to position and that each MACOM is best able to make that decision.

Another possible source of the negative "flavor" to 3a may that, on the one hand, respondents believe that user experience enhances the effectiveness of a contracting officer, on the other hand they are unsure whether the benefit to be gained by increased reliance exceeds the cost. In several cases (in both interviews and surveys), respondents identified potential downfalls of a branch-coding philosophy. The most notable of these included a loss of assignments flexibility, or "stove-piping" within the FA 97 community wherein officers wind up "sub-tracking" a career path within a career path; and the difficulties associated with managing the connection between entry level assessment into the AAC, and assignments at the senior O-5/O-6 level several years later.

In short, the author concludes that, based on the discussion above and especially on the overwhelming strength of the 2b responses, respondents believe that an increased reliance on branch coding *should* be beneficial but that a determination as to the *cost* of increased reliance must first be made.

C. GENERAL MILITARY VERSUS SPECIFIC OPERATIONAL EXPERIENCE.

The issue that needs to be resolved here stems from the fact that a large number of participants modified their responses to statement 2i by saying that the purpose of a uniformed presence in the Acquisition Corps is to provide "general military experience," not necessarily specific, branch-related, operational experience.

This is also a theme that surfaced several times throughout the survey.

In terms of arguing for an increased reliance on branch coding this is a relatively simple issue to resolve. In the author's opinion, branch coding a billet simply takes the notion of experience one step further. If we view experience as a spectrum, then, at one end, we have a civilian contracting officer with no military experience. Moving "up" the scale one step, we would have a uniformed contracting officer with "general" military experience but not specific branch related experience. And finally, at the far end of the spectrum, we would find a branch related officer who possesses both general and specific military, operational experience. While this is somewhat of an oversimplification, the point is that this interpretation can be taken to resolve this issue by concluding that the results should be viewed as favoring an increased reliance on branch coding because a branch coded officer would bring both general military and specific operational experience to bear on the acquisition process.

D. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CAREER MANAGEMENT FIELDS (CMFs) AND THE AMC COMMODITY ORGANIZATION.

The dilemma created here was due to the fact that a large number of respondents felt that the survey statement (2h), as it was presented in the survey, was too much of a generalization. These officers stated that each of the buying commands' products were, by and large, ultimately used by all soldiers in the field regardless of CMF.

The author's counter to these statements (as previously

alluded to in Chapter IV), relies on the notion of "primacy of knowledge," and detailed expertise. Just because a soldier can get into a truck and drive it doesn't mean, by any stretch of the imagination, that we would expect that same soldier to be able to render a detailed discussion on how the various engine components interact with each other to make the vehicle move. We would, however, expect a maintenance soldier/officer to be able to do so. As another example, would anyone expect the Infantry officer broadcasting a situation report over his radio to be able to explain in-depth how the internal components of the radio interact, or what radio frequency propagation is/does, or how the transmission "loads" on the antenna? Of course not!

The bottom line here is that we were able to identify the existence of a relationship between CMFs and commodity groupings through the survey (albeit moderate). By coupling this fact with the idea of "primacy of knowledge," we can resolve this anomaly and it becomes readily apparent that we can associate commodity groups with specific branches, or branch types.

E. PERSCOM OFFICER ASSIGNMENT POLICY.

During the interview with the FA 97 assignments officers at PERSCOM, both stated that the current PERSCOM policy is to make assignments based on the first two digits of a position code. For example, a typical contracting officer position code will look like 97A00 which means an FA 97 officer that is branch immaterial. A branch coded slot will have a position code such as 97A18 which would mean an FA 97 that is also a Special Forces branch officer.

Both assignments officers said that they do, in practice, try to assign FA 97 officers bearing in mind branch specificity. In other words they will *try* to assign an Infantry officer (CMF 11), to a billet coded 97A11, but that their first priority is to fulfill the Functional Area requirement. In the author's opinion this is commendable but is also too dependent on the personal discretion of the particular assignments officer. In other words the relative amount of importance given to branch considerations will vary from assignments officer to assignments officer. For example, during the conduct of the interview, Captain Carroll stated that on several occasions he had received Personnel Requisitions from the MACOMs that identified a specific branch in the request and that he had ignored the specification because, in his opinion, it wasn't a valid requirement.

E. SUMMARY.

The purpose of this chapter was to resolve four issues that had been left insufficiently answered in the data analysis presented in Chapter IV. We have resolved all four and find that respondents do indicate that an increased reliance *should* be beneficial but that the issue needs further exploration so as to identify the costs associated with increasing the level of reliance; that the use of branch coding would simultaneously satisfy both a "specific" and a "general" military experience requirement; that, through the notion of primacy of knowledge, there does exist a relationship between an officers branch and the commodity organization of the AMC MACOMs; and that the current

PERSCOM assignment policy of assigning based only on the first two digits of a billet code is limited by the fact that it is subject to the personal discretion of the individual assignments officer, and varies depending on how often the assignments officer is rotated.

In closing it must be noted that all of the research to this point has revolved essentially around a question of "should we" increase our reliance on branch coding. The short answer, from the perspective of the respondents, is yes, we should. We will now turn to the issue of "how" in the next chapter as we conclude the thesis by identifying specific actions that should be taken in light of the findings here.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. GENERAL.

This chapter presents the conclusions that can be made based on the discussion and analysis of the research findings in the preceding chapters. It also provides some recommendations in terms of actions to be taken. Finally, the chapter presents several areas for further research.

B. CONCLUSIONS.

There are four key conclusions based on the research findings.

1. **Increased reliance on branch coding.** Respondents believe that an increase in the amount of emphasis placed on branch coding FA 97 billets beyond the current level present in the Acquisition Corps should be beneficial to the Corps. This conclusion is derived from the specific findings that show: user experience enhances the effectiveness of a cognizant contracting officer; there is a desire for contracting officer user experience within the Acquisition Corps community; and that the presence of branch-specific contracting officers allows for the introduction of both general as well as specific military experience into the acquisition community.

2. **Branch-coding decisions.** Respondents believe that the best place to make branch-coding decisions, in terms of both the specific branch as well as which billets to code or not to code, is at the organizational level (i.e. MACOM or buying command level). This is as opposed to decisions being made at the Headquarters, Department of the Army level (i.e. PERSCOM).

3. **CMF-AMC MACOM relationship.** The research shows that a relationship exists between the commodity groups around which the Army Materiel Command's MACOMs are organized, and the Career Management Fields (CMFs) of the soldiers that ultimately put the equipment to operational use. This conclusion is caveated with the notion of "primacy of knowledge." In other words, in terms of identifying where CMF-commodity relationships do, or do not, exist, the fundamental question that must be asked is: Where are the "subject matter experts" on the equipment?

4. **Branch specific assignments prohibitions.** The research shows that, although currently there is a relative lack of emphasis on branch coding FA 97 *billets*, there is nothing in terms of either philosophy or policy that prevents the *assignment* of an FA 97 officer with user experience to a billet. In many cases, in fact, PERSCOM has made FA 97 assignments where the assigned officer had specific operational experience with the commodity type of the command to which he/she was assigned.

C. **RECOMMENDATIONS.**

There are three major recommendations provided here and all three are shown in the paragraphs that follow.

1. **User experience policy letter.** The FA 97 proponent office should initiate a study to identify and compare/contrast the potential costs and benefits associated with an increased reliance on branch coding. This study, which could and should be accomplished in large part through the sponsorship of thesis preparation by Army FA 97 graduate students, should involve a

MACOM-by-MACOM review of all FA 97 contracting officer positions so as to identify the specific functional duties performed by each. A decision should then be made with regards to the usefulness of branch specifying each billet. This process must focus on whether or not a branch specific officer would be the most effective in filling the position.

The end result of this study (or studies as the case may be), should be the preparation and publication of an FA 97 user experience policy that identifies considerations to be applied in deciding whether billets should, or should not, be branch coded. These considerations might include items such as: the amount of interface an FA 97 has with user (i.e. PM) organizations; the availability of branch-specific officers in the Acquisition Corps population that can be used to fill branch coded billets; or the use of "branch types" (e.g. combat arms, combat support, or combat service support) in coding billets.

2. **PERSCOM assignment policy change.** The interviews indicated that the current PERSCOM-wide assignment policy is one whereby officers are assigned to billets based solely on the Functional Area requirement. The FA 97 personnel managers should undertake to develop an assignment policy wherein the first priority is given to an officer that simultaneously fulfills the requirement of both the Functional Area and the branch. This is, admittedly, a subtle change but a necessary one all the same. The acquisition community is one area of the Army where uniformed officers will rely on integrating their previous experience into

the performance of their acquisition peculiar tasks. While the current assignments officers state that they do attempt to bear branch specificity in mind when making assignments, this is too subject to variation based on the personal judgment of whoever the particular assignments officer happens to be at the time an assignment is made. The policy should be "codified" to the maximum extent possible in a written policy so as to reduce the impact of variation due to personnel turnover in the FA 97 assignments office.

3. **FA 97 billet review.** The personnel managers at the Army Materiel Command should initiate a detailed review of each FA 97 contracting officer position (either unilaterally, or in conjunction with an FA 97 proponency office study), within AMC so as to identify the specific functional duties performed by each and then render a decision with regards to the usefulness of branch specificity. This process, however, must stress that the focus should be on whether a branch specific officer would be more effective than a non-branch specific officer in performing the job. Consideration should be given to the relationship between the manner in which AMC MACOMs are organized along specific commodity lines, and the CMFs of the soldiers that ultimately put the commodity items to use in the field. Also, AMC could give additional consideration to relating FA 97 billets to FA 51 coded billets. For example, if CECOM has 65% of its FA 51 billets coded for Signal Corps officers perhaps there should be a similar percentage of FA 97 billets.

D. ANSWERS TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

1. Primary. *Should operational, or user, experience be a factor in the assignment of contracting officers to commands responsible for procuring supplies and services?*

User experience should be a critical factor in the assignment of contracting officers within the AMC buying commands, and should be second only to considerations of Functional Area requirement, and rank.

2. Subsidiary.

a) *What commands are responsible for procuring supplies and services?*

The Army Materiel Command's Major Subordinate Commands (MACOMs) are the primary organizations within the Army Acquisition Corps that have responsibility for the procurement of all the supplies and services needed by the Army at large.

b) *What is the legislative, regulatory, and command guidance concerning the preference for user experience and knowledge on the part of the cognizant contracting officer?*

The extent of the guidance that has been issued with regards to user experience is limited only to the idea that the purpose of a uniformed presence in the Acquisition Corps is to provide operational experience. There is a dearth of guidance with regards to specific user experience.

c) *What was the rationale behind the development of the basic branch coding in the current fielding plan of the uniformed contracting officers in the Army Acquisition Corps?*

The primary considerations applied in developing the current fielding plan involved Functional Area alignment (i.e. an FA 97 in a contracting job or an FA 51 in a PM shop job); reconciliation of the total number of officers requested by the

MACOMs with the total number of officers available in the population; and validation of each position as first, an honest need for a billet and second, an evaluation of whether the position required a military officer (vice a civilian) to fill it.

d) To what extent, and under what conditions, would a lack of user experience on the part of the Procuring Contracting Officer reduce the effectiveness of an acquisition action?

The answer here is that the research shows a lack of user experience on the part of the PCO does not have a detrimental effect on a procurement action. The research also shows, however, that the introduction of user experience can have a positive impact.

e) Should specific user experience be required for officers being assigned to duties as contracting officers in commands that buy supplies and services?

The research shows that specific user experience should undoubtedly play a critical role if we want to enhance the effectiveness of contracting officers.

E. AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.

In order to further define and clarify the findings presented here the following areas for further research are provided.

1. **Implementation costs.** Research should be conducted in order to identify the potential costs of implementing the recommendations shown above. In this case the likely costs may include some level of reduced flexibility in terms of the assignments process and potential career development of FA 97 officers, as well as any requisite changes or modifications to the

method used in assessing officers into the Army Acquisition Corps. In other words, will there be officers whose career paths will be inhibited by the application of branch coding; and how would the assessment process have to change in order to bring officers in to the AAC and meet the branch specific requirements?

2. Specific functional tasks versus branch related knowledge.

A detailed review (perhaps of selected positions within a MACOM or MACOMs) should be conducted with an eye towards identifying all of the specific functional tasks required to be performed by the position. This list of tasks could then be evaluated in terms of how much "branch-specific" knowledge or experience would impact on the ability of the officer to perform the tasks. For example, if a position in TACOM routinely involved the detailed review of Statements of Work that included technical descriptions of Armor related systems, how much would the officer reviewing the SOWs be able to draw on previous experience as an Armor officer in Armor assignments in performing the review.

3. Personal satisfaction. A survey of officers newly assessed into the AAC could be performed in order to gauge their level of personal job satisfaction and whether or not they would receive more satisfaction serving in an entry level AAC assignment that was directly related to their previous branch assignments.

F. CLOSING COMMENTS.

The bottom line of this research reveals that an increased reliance on branch coding Functional Area 97 contracting officer billets in the Army Acquisition Corps is preferred. A detailed

discussion of how the AAC should implement this reliance is beyond the scope of this research. What this thesis does reveal, however, is that rather than asking the question "Could a non-branch specific officer do the job?" the question to ask is "whether a branch specific officer could do it *better*?"

APPENDIX A. ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

1. AAC: Army Acquisition Corps.
2. AMC: Army Materiel Command.
3. AMCCOM: Army Armaments, Munitions, and Chemical Command. An AMC MACOM, or buying command.
4. ARL: Army Research Laboratory. An AMC MACOM.
5. ASA-RDA: The Assistant Secretary of the Army for Research, Development and Acquisition. Commonly abbreviated as SARDA. Also referred to as the Army Acquisition Executive.
6. ATCOM: Army Aviation and Troop Command. An AMC MACOM, or buying command.
7. BDU: Battle Dress Uniform. The camouflage duty uniform worn by most soldiers in the U.S. Army.
8. Branch: A grouping of officers which comprises an arm or service of the Army.
9. CDC: Combat Development Center. The organization responsible for interface between the acquisition community and the user community. Each of the branch centers (e.g. Infantry, Armor, etc) has an organic CDC.
10. CECOM: Communications-Electronics Command. An AMC MACOM, or buying command.
11. CMF: Career Management Field. A grouping of duty positions made up of skills and requirements which are mutually supporting and culminate in the development of officers skills necessary to perform at the LTC or COL level.
12. CSA: Chief of Staff of the Army. A four-star position; the senior uniformed representative of the Army and a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
13. Cognizant Contracting Officer. The contracting officer directly involved in, responsible for, and knowledgeable about a procurement action.
14. COL. Colonel. An officer in the grade of O-6.
15. DACM. Director of Acquisition Career Management. An officer, or SES position, directly reporting to the SARDA that is responsible for the development of policy and oversight in terms of any decisions/actions effecting the career paths of Acquisition Corps members.

16. DAWIA. Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act. Chapter 87, Title XII, Public Law 101-510.
17. DCMAO. Defense Contract Management Area Operations.
18. DCMD. Defense Contract Management District.
19. DCSPER. The Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel.
20. DESCOM. Depot Systems Command. An AMC MACOM.
21. DFARS. The Department of Defense Supplement to the Federal Acquisition Regulation.
22. DLA. Defense Logistics Agency.
23. DPRO. Defense Plant Representative Office.
24. FA. Functional Area. A grouping of officers by career field other than arm, service, or branch that possess an interrelated grouping of tasks or skills which usually requires significant education, training, or experience.
25. FAR. Federal Acquisition Regulation.
26. HQDA. Headquarters, Department of the Army.
27. KO. Contracting officer. The Army generally refers to contracting officers as KOs as opposed to COs to avoid confusion with a Commanding Officer which is generally abbreviated CO.
28. LTC. Lieutenant Colonel. An officer in the grade of O-5.
29. MACOM. Major subordinate command.
30. MAMB. The Military Acquisition Management Branch. The branch of the Army Acquisition Corps Management Office responsible for management of uniformed members of the AAC.
31. MAPL. The Military Acquisition Position List. A document that identifies every billet for the uniformed members of the Army Acquisition Corps.
32. MICOM. Missile Command. An AMC MACOM, or buying command.
33. PCO. The Principal Contracting Officer. The contracting officer directly assigned responsibility for the completion of a contractual action.
34. PEO. Program Executive Officer.

- 35. PERSCOM. U.S. Army Personnel Command. The agency, at HQDA level, responsible for the consolidated, centralized management of all personnel in the United States Army.
- 36. PM. Program Manager.
- 37. SOW. Statement of Work. The document which identifies the necessary work to be performed as part of a procurement action.
- 38. TACOM. Tank Automotive Command. An AMC MACOM, or buying command.
- 39. TECOM. Test and Evaluation Command. An AMC MACOM.
- 40. USDA. Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. Army Student Detachment
U.S. Naval Postgraduate School
Monterey, California 93943-5000

Date~

Rank~ First name~ Last name~
Address~
City~, State~ Zip code~

Dear Rank~ Last name~,

Reference our phone conversation on Date~ and the enclosed survey questionnaire. As I said when we spoke, I am an SF officer attending graduate school prior to entering the Acquisition Corps. As part of my graduate work I am doing my thesis on the extent to which user experience should be a factor in assigning Functional Area 97 officers to positions in the Army buying commands.

For the purposes of the thesis I am defining user experience as the branch peculiar knowledge, skill, or judgment gained through the practice or conduct of military operations. A portion of my research involves surveying senior Acquisition Corps officers in order to ascertain the level of preference for FA 97 user experience. I ask that you please take the time to complete the questionnaire and return it to me in the envelope provided.

Your assistance is greatly appreciated. Please add any comments or suggestions that you think would be pertinent to the subject.

Should you wish to talk directly to me, I can be reached at the address shown below, or telephonically at 408-649-0651.

CPT Damon T. Walsh
U.S. Naval Postgraduate School
2 University Circle
Monterey, CA 93943-1668

Sincerely,

ENCL:
Survey Questionnaire
Return Envelope

Damon T. Walsh
Captain, Special Forces
United States Army

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. GENERAL INFORMATION:

- a. Rank_____ b. Primary Branch_____ c. Functional Area_____
- d. MACOM_____ e. Title/Duty Position_____
- f. How long in current position_____
- g. Is your current position a "Critical Position" UP of DODI 5000.52M and the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA): YES_____ NO_____
- h. Total number of years in acquisition/procurement related assignments:_____
- i. Of your total number of years in the acquisition community please indicate below where your time has been spent by indicating the number of years in each of the categories:
 DLA (or DOD/Joint)_____ AMC_____ Base, camp, station _____
 Pre-Award (PCO) _____ Post-Award (ACO/Terminations) _____

2. Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 5 being "strongly agree." For the purposes of this survey "user experience" means operational experience with the type of equipment or items being purchased. For example, user experience for the purchase of a new helicopter, or helicopter related items, would mean an Aviator. Please circle the appropriate number on the bar below the question. If you feel it is necessary to modify your rating with written comments, check the "REMARKS MADE" block and place your comments in the remarks section at the end of this section. Please preface each of your written comments with the question number (e.g. "2a:").

a. User experience is required on the part of a cognizant contracting officer in order for him/her to effectively perform his/her duties.

				2a: REMARKS MADE _____
1	2	3	4	5
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> < > </div>				
STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE

b. User experience would enhance the effectiveness of a cognizant contracting officer although it is not absolutely required.

				2b: REMARKS MADE _____
1	2	3	4	5
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> < > </div>				
STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE

c. A contracting officer from another service (i.e. a Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps contracting officer) would be just as effective serving in an Army buying command billet, as would be an Army FA 97 officer.

2c: REMARKS MADE_____

1	2	3	4	5
<hr/>				
STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE

d. When a contracting officer has user experience with a proposed item that facilitates the preparation of requirements documents (i.e. Statements of Work/Bid packages).

2d: REMARKS MADE_____

1	2	3	4	5
<hr/>				
STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE

e. It is safe to say that in the acquisition community there is a desire for contracting officer user experience, but not necessarily a need for this type of operational experience.

2e: REMARKS MADE_____

1	2	3	4	5
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STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE

f. By the time a procurement action reaches the PCO level, the requirements definition is specific enough to preclude a requirement for the contracting officer's user familiarity with the item.

2f: REMARKS MADE_____

1	2	3	4	5
<hr/>				
STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE

g. It has always been helpful for newly assigned FA 97 officers to familiarize themselves with the items being procured by their new command.

2g: REMARKS MADE_____

1	2	3	4	5
<hr/>				
STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE

h. The items procured by each of the "buying commands" in AMC are generally of such a nature that the operational users of the equipment items will fall within specific Career Management Fields (e.g. items purchased by TACOM will usually ultimately be put to use in the field armor or mechanized infantry soldiers).

				2h: REMARKS MADE
1	2	3	4	5
←-----→				
STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE

i. One of the purposes of having a uniformed presence in the Acquisition Corps is to bring operational expertise to the acquisition community.

				2i: REMARKS MADE
1	2	3	4	5
←-----→				
STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE

SECTION 2 REMARKS: Please provide any written comments that modify the remarks and statements shown above.

The current Military Acquisition Position List (MAPL) indicates that 84% of all FA 97 positions are branch immaterial in terms of the basic branch of the officer required for the position. Removing the DLA positions from the MAPL reduces the branch immaterial percentage to 81%. The following questions relate to these statistics.

a. Should there be a heavier reliance on branch coding for all FA 97 positions. In other words should more FA 97 billets be coded for a specific branch or branch type (e.g. Combat Arms or Combat Support)?

YES_____ NO_____

-3a: REMARKS:

b. If you feel there should be a heavier reliance on branch coding should this reliance vary by grade? In other words should entry level positions (O-3 or O-4) be branch immaterial while critical positions (O-5 or O-6) be branch coded?

YES_____ NO_____

-3b: REMARKS:

c. If you feel there should be a heavier reliance on branch coding should this reliance vary by MACOM or duty position? In other words should DLA (DCMAO or DPRO) positions be branch immaterial while AMC (buying command) billets be branch coded?

YES_____ NO_____

-3c: REMARKS:

4. Have you ever encountered a situation where a lack of user experience the part of the contracting officer had a detrimental effect on a procurement action? Please explain below.

5. Which, if any, of the various Army buying commands would benefit having uniformed contracting officers that have prior user, or operation experience in terms of the predominant types of items, equipment, commodities that the command is responsible for procuring?

6. Please make any additional comments below (or on additional sheets necessary), that you feel are pertinent to the topic of the survey.

APPENDIX C. SURVEY SECTION 2: MODIFYING STATEMENTS

1. Statement 2a Modifying Statements.

1) FA 51; Scored answer: AGREE. "This issue needs to be looked at on a case-by-case (contract-by-contract) situation."

2) FA 97; Scored answer: DISAGREE. "The 'Green Suit' experience definitely impacted successful completion (not so much which branch)." "...the further a system moves through the acquisition cycle the less branch specific qualifications impact on it." "...early in development it is not a requirement to be branch specific."

3) FA 51; Scored answer: AGREE. "Though not always required, I firmly believe Acquisition Corps officers with an operational background are needed."

4) FA 51; Scored answer: AGREE. "Yes--it helps. However the user with operational experience is more beneficial in a 51 billet in the requirements generation, or PMO, than they would be in a 97 billet as production, procurement, Quality Control officer."

5) FA 97; Scored answer: NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE. "Since almost all KOs are civilian I can't argue for a 'requirement' for user experience."

6) FA 51; Scored answer: DISAGREE. "Look at the Air Force. They grow Acquisition officers without user experience."

7) FA 97; Scored answer: DISAGREE. "I feel user experience is a must--but not by your definition. Any operational assignment is sufficient to procure any commodity item."

8) FA 97; Scored answer: DISAGREE. "User experience may be required in certain assignments, e.g., assignment to a PEO/PM organization managing armored systems (M1A1, BFVS, etc.) of an armor officer would enhance the effectiveness of the organization."

9) FA 97; Scored answer: AGREE. "Experience or knowledge of the items being procured, especially complex procurements, is an absolute must for the successful acquisition."

10) FA 97; Scored answer: NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE. "A contracting officer must make the effort to understand what he is buying and how it will be employed to satisfy requirements of the ultimate user." "Successful procurements are not only exercises in proper documentation and correct acquisition procedures, but also did you get the best value item to satisfy the user's need."

11) FA 51; Scored answer: DISAGREE. "Contracting is a skill that does not require 'user' type knowledge of the item being

contracted for. A good KO (SC 97) can be branch immaterial."

12) FA 97; Scored answer: AGREE. "During Desert Storm contracting officers with user experience made the difference since the requirements people did not know or could not adequately write up their requirement. I was the PARC/Commander of ARCENT contracting command in Saudi."

13) FA 97; Scored answer: NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE. "Not necessarily required but would certainly be beneficial."

14) FA 97; Scored answer: NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE. "Anyone can perform contracting functions without user experience, however, user experience certainly heightens your understanding of the product being purchased and its importance."

15) FA 97; Scored answer: STRONGLY AGREE. "Mission equipment i.e.-aviation buying helicopters."

16) FA 97; Scored answer: NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE. "Don't agree that experience is needed in related items, just need operational knowledge in general (desirable)."

17) FA 97; Scored answer: AGREE. "User experience really depends on the program/item(s) being managed/procured. While not in all cases is user experience necessary, it would be highly desirable in some, and critical in others. A balance within an organization would be best. That allows 'long-term' stability and expertise within the Acquisition Center that a civilian has, with 'hands-on' knowledge and sense of urgency that a military member gives to the organization."

18) FA 51; Scored answer: AGREE. "I believe your definition of user experience is too narrow. User experience means more than just 'operational experience'...with equipment. I do not believe that a system can only be developed or procured by the branch(es) which employs it. User experience to me means someone familiar with the service, its needs, how it fights, and how the equipment will be used."

19) FA 51; Scored answer: AGREE. "KO needs Army 'field' experience-how we work and operate-does not necessarily need 'user' experience in the area he is procuring in."

2. Statement 2b Modifying Statements.

1) FA 51; Scored answer: AGREE. "In most procurement areas."

2) FA 97; Scored answer: STRONGLY AGREE. "Aside from performing as the technical expert to place a requirement on contract, much of a KO's time is spent refining the SOW/CDRL/GFE so

that he has an enforceable contract. User experience provides a big payoff in performing these scrubs and establishing credibility with both the Program Office and Contractor personnel."

3) FA 97; Scored answer: STRONGLY AGREE. "Operational experience and expertise makes us better prepared to enhance a buying commands performance, but I feel a dedicated aviation officer can help buy tanks, trucks, ships, etc."

4) FA 51; Scored answer: AGREE. "...intimate user knowledge is nice to have, but not important to fulfilling his role...one exception: during termination/show cause/contract restructuring exercises, it is at times very important that the KO understands subtle nuances of technology and system performance to base his actions upon."

5) FA 51; Scored answer: AGREE. "My experience with PCOs is that they concentrate on acquisition regulations and laws more so than performance, cost and schedule and therefore don't need or use troop experience. PMs on the other hand do use troop experience in managing cost, sch, perf. If your questions are geared toward a PCO who functions as a PM as in a smaller community then he would use and maybe require troop experience."

6) FA 97; Scored answer: STRONGLY AGREE. "Anyone can perform contracting functions without user experience, however, user experience certainly heightens your understanding of the product being purchased and its importance."

7) FA 97: Scored answer: AGREE. "User experience really depends on the program/item(s) being managed/procured. While not in all cases is user experience necessary, it would be highly desirable in some, and critical in others. A balance within an organization would be best. That allows 'long-term' stability and expertise within the Acquisition Center that a civilian has, with 'hands-on' knowledge and sense of urgency that a military member gives to the organization."

8) FA 97; Scored answer: STRONGLY AGREE. "User experience in the specified field is desired, i.e. aviators buying helicopters, but if an aviator is not available, I feel at least a combat arms officer is needed. He must be able to relate to the customer. Combat support and combat service support officers seem to have a much harder time gaining the trust of the 'customer' i.e. PM."

3. Statement 2c Modifying Statements.

1) FA 51; Scored answer: AGREE. "We've had Marine Corps aviators work as Army PMs and procurement officers for common requirements for USA and USMC."

2) FA 97; Scored answer: AGREE. "Since almost all KOs are civilians I can't argue for a 'requirement' for user experience."

3) FA 97; Scored answer: AGREE. "...the background of the individual is not as important as the quality of the individual. He should know what it feels like to be on the receiving end of the acquisition system. Beyond that...the FAR is the FAR."

4) FA 97; Scored answer: DISAGREE. "Familiarity with service supplements and specific procedures may impact PCO capability of supporting 'their' service requirements--Experience in DLA/DCMC indicates or supports this by such comments as 'that's not the way we do it in the Air Force,' or 'we don't have to do that in the Navy.'"

5) FA 97; Scored answer: STRONGLY DISAGREE. "If contracting were viewed as an isolated function then service distinction would not be important. Contracting, however, also involves knowledge of requirements, supportability, and doctrine of the supported customer. For these reasons, service-peculiar assignments would be more effective than cross-service assignments."

6) FA 97; Scored answer: AGREE. "Generally true: I served as a contracting officer with only Navy and AF contracts."

7) FA 97; Scored answer: NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE. "As joint training, doctrine, and assignments continue toward a 'people' force, distinctions should become less and less among contracting officers from all services."

8) FA 51; Scored answer: STRONGLY DISAGREE. "A Marine Corps Field Artillery officer could serve equally well as an Army Field Artillery officer to procure/contract for artillery related equipment. The direct correlation of Army/Marine Corps specialties is unique however and should not be applied across the board, i.e. to Air Force or Navy officers. In some limited examples in weeks in general it does not."

9) FA 51; Scored answer: DISAGREE. "The service 'ethics' are different and influence perceptions of fairness and urgency."

10) FA 97; Scored answer: AGREE. "I believe the underlying key is an understanding of the mission of the respective service."

11) FA 51; Scored answer: AGREE. "User experience is vital in the requirements and material development community but not necessarily in the contract office."

12) FA 97; Scored answer: NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE. "While not doubting the ability of a contracting officer from another service to fill an Army billet, each service has unique requirements to learn. I find it interesting to think that at some time in the future, we may have a 'purple' Acquisition Corps."

Joint Program Offices already do this to some degree, each service involved in the program has 'service' representation."

13) FA 51; Scored answer: DISAGREE. "A KO from another service would be just as effective if he/she took the time to familiarize themselves with the equipment it uses, capabilities, employment, tactics, etc. Without this you may just as well civilianize all 97 positions."

14) FA 97; Scored answer: DISAGREE. "Effectiveness depends on knowing the system (i.e. how the service is structured and how lines of communication/responsibility are structured). 'Other' service people would need to learn how the Army works before they could engage the gears effectively. More important is the ability to ensure that the requiring activity has completely described the requirement and checks to ensure what is desired (end item) is actually acquired."

15) FA 97; Scored answer: AGREE. "If he would be as effective handling contracting issues however would have to learn the Army system and acronyms."

4. Statement 2d Modifying Statements.

1) FA 97; Scored answer: STRONGLY AGREE. "Aside from performing as the technical expert to place a requirement on contract, much of a KO's time is spent refining the SOW/CDRL/GFE so that he has an enforceable contract."

2) FA 97; Scored answer: AGREE. "In most buying commands, technical specialists (i.e. engineers, logisticians, etc.) write SOWs. The PCO merely integrates all requirements into an RFP. Knowledge would help, but is not a must."

3) FA 97; Scored answer: NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE. "PCOs should review and question but not become an active player in requirements documents."

4) FA 51; Scored answer: NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE. "Our KOs are only 'paper graders'--none of them help prepare SOWs."

5) FA 97; Scored answer: DISAGREE. "Contracting officers don't prepare requirements documents. They do, however, review for adequacy prior to release of a solicitation."

6) FA 51; Scored answer: NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE. "PMs do SOWs not contracting officers."

7) FA 51; Scored answer: DISAGREE. "My experience would indicate troop experience would facilitate his sense of cooperation and urgency in executing contracts. In my experience, PCOs do not develop SOWs or contract requirement packages, they are done in

house by PM personnel and then handed over to PCO for execution."

8) FA 51; Scored answer: DISAGREE. "Project Manager prepares statement of work."

9) FA 97; Scored answer: AGREE. "However, the PCO rarely 'develops' the SOW. This is a PEO responsibility."

10) FA 97; Scored answer: DISAGREE. "SOWs are prepared in Program Mgmt office. PCOs only review for contractual requirements."

11) FA 51; Scored answer: NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE. "Contracting officer doesn't prepare SOW."

12) FA 51; Scored answer: NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE. "I've never had a PCO with user experience on the item he was contracting for. I think user experience is irrelevant to being a PCO."

5. Statement 2e Modifying Statements.

1) FA 97; Scored answer: NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE. "There are many good COs that are civilian with no military experience however I feel a good philosophy is to incorporate military COs with experience to balance the contracting environment."

2) FA 51; Scored answer: STRONGLY AGREE. "Your question e. sums up what I believe to be the opinion of the PM community here in St. Louis, at least in PEO Aviation. I can say its a consensus because of the fact that shortly after receiving you questionnaire, I remarked to my boss on the receipt of your letter and questionnaire while waiting for a meeting to begin which involved many other PMs (both O-5 and O-6 PMs). After a brief discussion during which most of PMs present offered comments, it became apparent that PMs value procurement expertise over operational expertise without question. This also happens to be my opinion as well."

3) FA 97; Scored answer: DISAGREE. "I feel there is a real need for operational experience in the acquisition community. It is too easy to lose sight of the needs of the soldier. A substantial level of operational experience must be maintained in order to stay focused on soldier support."

4) FA 51; Scored answer: DISAGREE. "Currently in the acquisition community we are on a track to get away from user experience-e.g. all acq. corps assignments after 8 YOS means no user exp necessary."

5) FA 97; Scored answer: DISAGREE. "The benefits of user experience are minimal with contrast to actual hard core contracting experience."

6. Statement 2f Modifying Statements.

1) FA 51; Scored answer: AGREE. "This is usually but not always the case."

2) FA 51; Scored answer: DISAGREE. "It definitely helps if the PCO is familiar with the item being procured because it provides another 'set of eyes' in the review process, i.e. the PCO can double check the engineer who wrote the SOW."

3) FA 97; Scored answer: DISAGREE. "This is not always true, especially for R&D contracting where requirements may not always be well-defined. For more mature systems and spares, requirements may be more refined. User familiarity with similar systems is helpful in instances of emerging systems, e.g. armored experience with the development of the next generation tank or gun-system."

4) FA 97; Scored answer: STRONGLY DISAGREE. "Gov't specs are most frequent area that leads to claims (those that most frequently found versus government are defective specifications). The more knowledgeable people reviewing the Specs/SOW the better. Frequently, a PCO with user experience will be able to find errors or areas for improvement that spec writers/engineers without operational/field experience will miss."

5) FA 51; Scored answer: STRONGLY DISAGREE. "In a cost plus environment--NEVER."

6) FA 97; Scored answer: DISAGREE. "You must have some familiarity to give a sanity check or know the Army organization and system well enough to get questions answered."

7) FA 97; Scored answer: DISAGREE. "Acquisition is not a paper process, the PCO must be involved early in the requirements determination/definition to understand what hardware is needed to meet what requirements of the customer. The PCO may not have to have personal user experience (although it can help), but he has to be committed to educating himself on what and why he is buying specific hardware to meet specific user needs."

8) FA 51; Scored answer: DISAGREE. "Contracting officer must have commodity experience, not necessarily operational experience."

9) FA 97; Scored answer: DISAGREE. "It might be, this is a key reason for KO familiarity with subject matter."

10) FA 51; Scored answer: STRONGLY AGREE. "The PM office writes the specs and purchase description based upon the ROC/ORD before the PCO ever gets involved."

11) FA 97; Scored answer: DISAGREE. "The requirement may be defined, but it may not be the solution to the deficiency. The

operational use of the item may impact quantity or configuration."

12) FA 97; Scored answer: STRONGLY DISAGREE. "Regardless of who the PCO is, having some background on the item/effort he/she is buying is essential. Form, fit or function is as important as cost. It does no one any good to have a low cost item that meets requirements definition, but fails to work."

7. Statement 2g Modifying Statements.

1) FA 51; Scored answer: AGREE. "Contracting staff are a part of all reviews (e.g. engineering, design, testing, etc.) in my PM experience. I demand they be familiar with all aspects of the program to ensure understanding of why I ask for certain things in contracting actions. This has worked very well."

2) FA 51; Scored answer: AGREE. "Not only with the item, but with how it is used and the environment it is used in."

3) FA 97; Scored answer: STRONGLY AGREE. "This is probably the biggest flaw in orienting new FA 97 officers. The contracting command should assign mentors (as does DCAA) to familiarize all new FA 97s on-site at production plants if possible--even for spares."

8. Statement 2h Modifying Statements.

1) FA 97; Scored answer: AGREE. "Key term is generally, i.e. Im 93 Radiacmeters are procured by CECOM, not AMCCOM. There are other systems in a similar state."

2) FA 97; Scored answer: NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE. "Be careful here! TACOM fields trucks to all branches; AMCCOM fields ordnance and weapons to all branches; ATCOM is now responsible for Aviation and Troop support; CECOM delivers commo equipment to everyone."

3) FA 97; Scored answer: DISAGREE. "Communications-Electronics may be the exception."

4) FA 97; Scored answer: STRONGLY DISAGREE. "Repair/spare parts may be used in many systems--as may many components, e.g. CECOM buys radios--user may be Armor, Infantry, QM officer just as easily as Signal Corps. The Ordnance/QM officer may be as familiar as Armor officer with diesel engines/track pads/radiators etc."

5) FA 51; Scored answer: DISAGREE. "Not always true. My PCO is at MICOM and I'm responsible for the sight on the M2 Bradley. Also I'm responsible for various test equipment used by ordnance/maintenance personnel."

6) FA 97; Scored answer: AGREE. "Yes, but many of the officers in a place like TACOM are ordnance - they don't fight with

the equipment, but have to maintain it. Don't forget the PM's organization."

7) FA 97; Scored answer: STRONGLY DISAGREE. "Nearly all branches of the Army use TACOM products. Trucks, HMMWVs, etc support throughout all TOE units and their authorized force structure. User familiarity with maneuver, maintenance, and sustainment doctrine is tremendously helpful in horizontal integration of TACOM systems across all of our battlefield operating systems."

8) FA 51; Scored answer: NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE. "Too general; tactical missiles are employed by infantry, aviation, field artillery, and air defense artillery!"

9) FA 51; Scored answer: DISAGREE. "TACOM procures numerous end items for support branches and light forces."

10) FA 97; Scored answer: DISAGREE. "Agree they are track users, but others also use wheel vehicles, repair wheels and tracks, and order/ship/receive/stock repair parts and end items."

11) FA 51; Scored answer: STRONGLY DISAGREE. "Several buying commands (e.g. CECOM) buy thousands of systems, sets, repair parts, etc. which are used by other than signal soldiers. For example SINCGAR radio, EPLRS user units, GPS receivers. As well, millions of repair parts are procured annually in each buying command--these are 'used' by ordnance soldiers, etc. It would be most difficult to align a specific branch experience with a commodity to be procured except at the major system level (e.g. new tank, new aircraft, etc.)

12) FA 51; Scored answer: DISAGREE. "TACOM has the Advanced Field Artillery System, Combat Mobility Vehicle, Heavy Assault Bridge, and numerous other programs which are not Infantry and Armor branch related."

13) FA 97; Scored answer: NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE. "In only a few instances such as aviation. Almost all branches use the products of CECOM, TACOM, AMCCOM."

14) FA 97; Scored answer: NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE. "Trucks and radios are used by everyone."

15) FA 97; Scored answer: NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE. "Confusing question. Don't understand what it has to do w/context of questions."

16) FA 97; Scored answer: STRONGLY DISAGREE. "This is a terrible over-generalization! Commodity buying commands of AMC buy items of common applicability for all soldiers (e.g. radios, wheel vehicles, weapons, clothing, etc, etc). With regards to

specialized end items, in almost every case a variety of CMFs are required to produce a proper SOW (e.g. a tank requires expertise from Armor, Ordnance, Transportation, Quartermaster, and Signal officers).

17) FA 97; Scored answer: DISAGREE. "Disagree because drivers, mechanics, and all other types of logisticians use TACOM managed items as well as maintain and support these items."

18) FA 97; Scored answer: AGREE. "As defense dollars shrink, we may see more alignment of buying commands. This could lead to some 'unusual' marriages within the DOD."

9. Statement 2i Modifying Statements.

1) FA 51; Scored answer: STRONGLY AGREE. "Unfortunately, HQDA & AMC are decreasing the number of junior officer positions and the requirements of the AAC will limit the experience level of uniformed military."

2) FA 51; Scored answer: AGREE. "'Green suiters' are present in acquisition land to kick tail and take names!"

3) FA 97; Scored answer: NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE. "The number of active duty officers doing contracting is so small that the argument can't be sustained. Officers perform KO duties primarily to train them in contracting fundamentals so they can perform with a good basis as program managers or in contracting office management."

4) FA 97; Scored answer: STRONGLY AGREE. "I feel the biggest value of our operational experience is our already developed management/leadership skills and our ability to show/teach others what the 'real' Army is like."

5) FA 97; Scored answer: STRONGLY AGREE. "Uniformed, field experienced acquisition officers provide not only a tangible return to an organization - practical user experience and employment of systems, tactics, and 'big picture' view of service requirements...they also provide the intangibles of unique perspectives, user representation imbedded in the buying activity, and can talk to the requiring activity. The acquisition community would be markedly less effective without the uniformed, field experienced soldier in the process."

6) FA 97; Scored answer: STRONGLY AGREE. "Yes - one of the purposes--however as an SF officer I would encourage you to study and question the Army's true need for FA 97s in the combat support role for contingency operations."

7) FA 97; Scored answer: STRONGLY AGREE. "In addition to user/operational experience, brings sense of urgency - is able to

stress and relate sense of importance. Is able to translate 0 stockage level, critical readiness item into required sense of urgency and importance that ensures correct priority is placed on the action, without this, all procurements are seen as the same. Also able to assure users their needs are understood and being responded to in an appropriate manner."

8) FA 51; Scored answer: STRONGLY AGREE. "Real purpose is to always do the right thing for the Army, which may be the wrong thing for the organization."

9) FA 51; Scored answer: AGREE. " Additionally the sense of urgency greensuiters bring, the leadership, fresh ideas (civilians stay in PM shops forever) is only made available to acquisition by uniforms (many disagree with me on this). Greensuiters can also go to HQDA and service schools and get things done where civilians cannot.

10) FA 97; Scored answer: STRONGLY AGREE. "But, the expertise is more an Army 'sense' and how the Army works than experience with a specific piece of equipment WHEN SERVING AS A 97. In program management, there ought to be more of an operational focus."

11) FA 51; Scored answer: STRONGLY AGREE. "Additionally, user experienced uniformed soldiers can talk to the user at each stage of the procurement."

12) FA 97; Scored answer: AGREE. "Even more important than operational experience is the enthusiasm, willingness to work and mission orientation that all military have. I would rather have 10 military than 20 civilians in a tough, volatile, and changing circumstance."

13) FA 97; Scored answer: STRONGLY AGREE. "In addition to operational expertise, uniformed members bring a sense of urgency and positive, can do thinking to the acquisition community."

14) FA 51; Scored answer: STRONGLY AGREE. "'Should be' one of the purposes.

APPENDIX D. SURVEY SECTION 3: MODIFYING STATEMENTS

Question 3a. Should there be a heavier reliance on branch coding for all FA 97 positions? In other words should more FA 97 billets be coded for a specific branch or branch type (e.g. Combat Arms or Combat Support)?

NO; "A FA 97 officer is by definition an Industrial Manager and Contracting officer. The likely chance of a career of contracting officer successive assignments is slim at best. Career succession into Prog. Management is fruitful after years of contracting exp." AD/97

NO; "Once coded 97's should not do combat or combat support work--they should stay acquisition up to and including FLAG officers with 'acquisition' backgrounds not FLAG officers who go to 'shake and bake' acquisition courses as promotable Colonels!" OD/97

NO; "DLA assignments are joint tours and should remain 97 versus branch specific. My position requires a 15 (aviator) because of Government Flight Representative duties. Only an aviator can perform GFR duties." AV/97

NO; "Doesn't seem to matter. Despite the "branch immaterial" coding, assignments officers, procurement execs, etc. search for acq corps personnel who have experience with specific types of hardware (that's why AAC officers with Armor experience generally end up at TACOM). So, there is already a heavy reliance on background." AR/51

NO; "We primarily enforce contract regs, pubs, and functions--something that is branch immaterial." OD/97

NO; "Specific branch experience can only be justified for a small number of major systems programs." AV/97

NO; "By getting officers of different branches rotating into a position there is a better chance of issues being looked at from different perspectives." IN/97

NO; "Formal training can fill the gap. Need to make the break between branch and the Acquisition Corps at the O-4 level. Command and General Staff level schooling, should be the last opportunity to 'rub shoulders' with the Branch." OD/97

NO; " I do not believe 51/97 positions should be aligned by branch. Most of the weapon systems in the field today were developed by officers from other than the user's branch. The services should seek officers from the Cbt Arms to manage/procure combat systems, but officers should compete based upon past performance, not branch." OD/51

NO; "The FA 97 needs Army operational/field experience. A FA 97 w/Armor experience as a 2LT/1LT/CPT could, I feel, operate effectively in a DLA position dealing with ordnance items" OD/51

NO; "Only exception, perhaps is Aviation acqn" EN/97

NO; "Not necessarily. As mentioned previously, this depends on whether an officer is assigned to a PEO/PM 'core' position or a matrix-support position, e.g. P&D Directorate. This could also depend on whether the matrix support is provided as general support or colocated direct support." OD/97

NO; "While branch experience is desired and may enhance the process it may just as well be a detractor. An infantry officer might be less objective about a contract affecting an infantry system. His opinions may seep into the contracting process leading to be at odds with decisions made by the PM or may cause him to want to interject himself into the decision making process at the operational/technical level which is the province of TRADOC and the PM; or an infantry PCO could just as easily give in too readily in negotiations due to his 'infatuation' with a 'gee whiz' infantry systems that is overpriced." IN/97

NO; "Except for aviation FA 97 who usually are required to fly at certain locations. My last DPRO assignment provided contract administration for Army Chaparral systems; Navy F-18 FLIRs, and Air Force AIM-9 missiles. We had an Army aviator, Army Chemical Corps, and Air Force officers assigned." AV/97

NO; "I feel the important thing to consider is that we have qualified Army officers involved and in charge of acquisition of Army materiel. Branch coding is less important. A CSS branch officer is just as capable of acquiring combat systems as a combat arms officer." OD/97

NO; "Some buying commands have requirements peculiar to the branch (aviation, nuclear ammo, for example) which are facilitated by branch specific 97s. Most, however, are not in this category." AV/51

NO; "Not for just the sake of requiring a branch. If a branch immaterial person can do the job--let them, we have more flexibility." OD/51

NO; "In DLA (DCMC) positions, all services, DOE, NASA, etc, are supported--what is learned by this is valuable and transfers directly to better contracts, requirements and performance." AV/97

NO; "With the introduction of FM 100-5 (Airland Battle) in 1982, the Army shifted its focus to training officers of all branches with a 'combined arms' understanding of how we prepare for and

fight wars. In acquisition positions a basic understanding of the battlefield operating systems and how they are horizontally integrated is sufficient to achieve FA 97 success." QM/97

NO; "All FA positions in the Acquisition Corps should be branch immaterial. Each branch should be required to contribute a determined number of individuals to the Acq. Corps but the Acq. Corps should manage positions only by functional area." IN/51

NO; "Contracting officers should be proficient at contracting, not technical or programmatic influence on the product, project, or program manager or his staff." AR/51

YES & NO; "Both marked. If the FA 97 pool has sufficient population to enjoy this luxury--> Yes. If not--> No." IN/51

YES; "It will help bridge the credibility gap with both the PMO and Contractor and make him a member of the acquisition team. Examples of credibility problems 1) a nonAirborne type negotiating for parachutes 2) a non-aviator negotiating for the AH-64 Helmet Mounted Display system 3) non-combat arms type negotiating for a new rifle 4) non-maintainer negotiating for test equipment or tool sets." AV/97

YES; "Depending on the type of assignment certainly has more of a need than others for a branch specific officer. It tends to give the officer more credibility. For example, I was an OD officer in the Chemical/Bio Cmd integrating the NBC suits into the new Abrams Tank. The PM (OD) liked the fact an OD officer was the program integrator vs a chemical officer." OD/97

YES; "For positions requiring both acquisition and product/item experience." QM/97

YES; "Branches should be targeted to commodity groupings. While coding should be branch specific when possible, the wholesale coding (personnel requirement) may not be possible due to other branch accession challenges--i.e. Signal Corps, Engineers, SF, OD & QM." OD/97

YES; "This would facilitate the Navy or Army in getting a better product for the soldier." AD/51

YES; "Probably. I have not thoroughly reviewed the MAPL and also don't know the specifics of each position, but, generally I feel most positions could be more branch specific." AV/97

YES; "Required: Combat arms Desired: Aviation" AD/97

NO ANSWER GIVEN; "It doesn't matter-I tried to do this as a young captain in 1979-PERSCOM only picks up the first two digits of any requirement-so this has never been fixed. So if you code a position 97/12 or 97/11 you can just as easily get a 97/92. The manning position system will not pick up the trailer specialty." OD/97

Question 3b. If you feel there should be a heavier reliance on branch coding should this reliance vary by grade? In other words should entry level positions (O-3 or O-4) be branch immaterial while critical positions (O-5 or O-6) be branch coded?

NO; "In fact the reverse may be appropriate." OD/51

NO; "Reverse-for PMO positions--O-3/O-4 branch material. O-5/O-6 less important." OD/51

NO; "O-3 or O-4 should have more recent 'user' experience." AD/51

NO; "If entry level positions are immaterial, critical positions should be immaterial." IN/51

NO; "I would think it should be just the opposite. The more junior positions should be branch related while the more senior positions would be branch immaterial." OD/51

NO; "Response assumes FA 97 billet. Being branch immaterial allows for greater opportunity to broaden the experience base while branch specific has an opposite effect and reduces flexibility on assignments." IN/51

NO; "In my opinion, all officers are more comfortable dealing with the commodity they have had field experience on. It is a better situation whatever the rank. However with the O-5 or O-6 it is not as important in some assignments." OD/97

NO; "Vice versa, entry level coded, higher level immaterial" AD/51

NO; "The CPT or MAJ will be doing the bulk of the detail work and that is where decisions will be made that could be affected by operational knowledge of the item/system in question. The LTC/COL also needs to operational experience but he/she will have less direct impact on the outcome. Also the experience being brought to bear by the senior officer should be from a different perspective operationally." FA/51

NO; "If anything I would be more inclined to have O-5/O-6 positions be branch immaterial given our officer corps 'horizontal' training background. O-3/O-4 may need branch coded given the vertical training focus through the company grades. As we go acquisition corps earlier in the future, O3 level, this point

becomes moot." QM/97

NO; "Except I would reverse your example. Entry level positions should be more branch specific, and senior positions could tend to be more branch immaterial." OD/51

NO; "But you might consider the reverse. Entry level is likely to be more 'hands-on' where branch experience might help." OD/97

NO; "The reverse may be a better option. Entry level positions normally cover a narrow field of contract actions in which the previous branch qualification skills are helpful. More senior positions normally cover a broader field in which an understanding of the service in general, or Defense wide, is of more benefit." AV/51

NO; "If you can fix the first problem identified above (PERSCOM system of ignoring trailer codes)--O-3/O-4 positions could be branch coded with O-5 and above branch immaterial. Keep the young officer still in development, as closely aligned with their branch as possible for mentoring and continuous training." OD/97

NO; "I'd prefer a 97A15 as a Procurement officer (O-3/O-4) working aviation programs as opposed to an acquisition officer who does not have this aviation experience." AV/97

NO; "Grow them through the accession process, otherwise there will be skill imbalances at the higher grades. I would argue the opposite direction--O-3/O-4 branch specific, O-5/O-6 immaterial." OD/97

NO; "Not necessarily. In fact it would be appropriate for all positions to be coded a specific MOS, and not just a combat arms MOS. CS and CSS positions are needed in some areas. It should be up to the specific organization to have a say in the coding." IN/51

NO; "I would recommend the reverse. Branch coding provides more results from O-3/O-4 given their experiences are 'fresher'. As we single track in Acquisition and progress, operational experience for O-5s/O-6s becomes less important and 'older'." OD/51

NO; "If anything, this position/question should/could be reversed." OD/51

NO; "All grades need branch coding." AV/51

NO; "Though there is more merit for higher grade positions to have related branch experience." SC/51

NO; "Same as a-if acquisition is pure-if we develop acquisition from O-3 to O-9 we won't know how to flavor for

Armor/Infantry/Aviation/etc--we'll do acquisition as it should be."
OD/97

NO; "Should be just the reverse" QM/97

YES; "Actually, the more senior the level, the less branch specific the job. The more senior the officer, the greater the generalists he or she becomes." IN/97

YES; "Branch coding in many cases should apply to O-4 positions. Example: QM nonrated (non-aviator) executive officer Bell Helicopter." AV/51

YES; "Possibly. One would need to look at the requirements of the particular duty position to make this determination." QM/97

YES; "Specific branch coding is probably more necessary at the lower levels because of the work involved, i.e. buying/contracting for a specific commodity. Officers occupying critical positions can be branch immaterial because general experience is needed from a functional standpoint, i.e. DLA experience, MSC-buying experience, etc." OD/97

YES; "Senior positions should be by branch because of command opportunities." QM/97

YES; "Agree with this strategy on both counts for those branches where it makes a difference." AV/51

YES; "It depends on how much direct customer contact the officer will have. Ones with lots of different customers or ones that deal with civilians should be immaterial." AD/97

YES; "But this is already the case. It's the way the 'system works'." AR/51

YES; "Entry level positions should be branch coded. Incumbents in such positions are 'fresh' from the troop world and can maximize the contributions of their experience, while learning the contracting trade. Critical positions don't necessarily require branch coding. These positions involve dealing with more general information where user experience isn't as critical." IN/51

YES; "This would allow younger officers to gain experience and the senior level would provide the branch specific experience for the product that would ultimately be purchased." AD/51

Question 3c. If you feel there should be a heavier reliance on branch coding should this reliance vary by MACOM or duty position? In other words should DLA (DCMAO or DPRO) positions be branch immaterial while AMC (buying command) billets be branch coded?

NO; "Both would benefit from branch familiarity." AD/51

NO; "AMC positions can require a wide range of understanding and user interface not predicated on specific branch orientation." QM/97

NO; "We are 51s or 97s who are Army officers-that is our skill. Our skill is not as a branch type officer." MI/51

NO; "DPROs should be coded branch, i.e. if you are at the Boeing, Mac or Bell plants you should be a 97/15." AV/97

NO; "However, branch coding in contingency contracting might be desirable. One would have to study the available population versus requirements carefully. Conversely, putting 'mustangs' from other branches into traditionally branch specific areas (TACOM has been a Mecca for ordnance officers) might help broaden a command's horizons (CGs are usually branch proponents) and reduce group think and parochialism." IN/97

NO; "DLA/DCMAO/DPRO positions should be coded according to the primary commodity--DPRO Martin Marietta is missile heavy--there should be a 97/91; DPRO LTB is MLRS & ATACM- 97/13; DPRO Texas Instruments-Javelin 97/11/91; DPRO Bell-97/aviation. MICOM, CECOM, ATCOM, TACOM, etc-commodity/branch. However, again you will find this has not been done because PERSCOM system only identifies the first two characters--but the need is there.

NO; "Even DLA (DPRO) slots should be considered for branch coding due to the technology and complexity of the major weapons systems." AV/51

NO; "The specific organization is better able to determine the coding of a position required through experience." IN/51

NO; "Many DLA positions are product specific. DPROs at helicopter companies Bell/Boeing/Sikorsky/MDHC should be aviation. DPROs at engine plants may vary depending on who their customer is; aviation-helicopter engines; Armor/Inf-M1 and Bradley engines; OD/TC-Truck engines." AV/97

NO; "Both senior positions should be coded by branch." QM/97

NO; "MACOMs are irrelevant-decision should be based on duties." AV/97

NO; "With exceptions for those requiring special qualifications--e.g. aircraft/pilot etc" OD/51

NO; "Depends on the position. A DPRO commander at a Contractor's plant that builds radios ought to be a signal officer, while one that builds helicopters ought to be an aviator." AD/97

NO; "Branch coding should be based on duty position, not MACOM." AV/97

NO; "DLA positions also need to be branch coded." QM/97

NO; "Quite obvious by the questioning that this survey wants to steer you towards acknowledging branch coding. An O-3 who never sees a line unit won't affiliate or be 'dipped' in his/her branch. He/she won't know the difference. The politics of today-if continued into the AC will kill it soon." OD/97

NO; "Branch code all--let's be smart." AV/51

YES and NO; "Most DCMAOs are immaterial as are most DPROs. There are some DPROs however, that are quite specialized-Raytheon for example where branch coding might serve to give the officer a better background." OD/97

YES; "I agree that it is more important to branch code AMC billets than DLA jobs." OD/97

YES; "Again...possibly. Each job will need to be evaluated on its own merits and requirements." QM/97

YES; "Coding is done by requirements...the reason for immaterial position growth is because that's the way the assignment process works anyway. Immaterial provides PERSCOM and the command greater assignment flexibility. What needs to be decided by the MACOM is which method (Br/FA code VS O1/O2/O3/FA) is better suited to their particular needs." OD/97

YES-(by duty position); "Example: not all ATCOM 97 billets need be filled by aviators. Some specific positions should be. Some specific positions perhaps at MICOM should be filled by a certain branch trained 97, but not all. Many 97s at either command at O-3/O-4 level could be branch immaterial." AV/51

NO ANSWER GIVEN: "DLA is certainly unique being a purple suited org so I must admit in reality branch immaterial positions are appropriate. However, AMC should continue to use branch specific officers in contracting assignments." OD/97

Question 4. Have you ever encountered a situation where a lack of user experience on the part of the contracting officer had a detrimental effect on a procurement action? Please explain below.

"Yes. PCO for ANVRC 12 Radio in JUN 1982. PCO was Ord officer. Acquisition should have been restricted to US only because of critical technology base. SC officer (PCO) would 'probably' have known this. Award went to Tetaran (Israel). Exception 13 was not used in acquisition strategy."

"Civilian contracting officers with no operational experience lack a sense of urgency in getting procurement actions approved. I believe this is because they have not experienced the frustrations of a line unit trying to accomplish its mission with inadequate/antiquated equipment."

"No. I have encountered a situation where the lak of procurement experience had a detrimental effect."

"No. If you are truly a contracting officer and have sufficient requirement data nothing should hinder you from letting a contract."

"No, however it had caused a fast course on terminology to be conducted."

"No. I have encountered too many technical guru's (or professed to be) who interfered with the process rather than support a successful effort by concentrating on their job."

"No, but a lack of an understanding of my business has caused big problems!"

"An 'infantry' competition advocate could not understand why a sole source action was in the best interest of a major missile system (Patriot). It took 8 months to fight the battle until he understood. This delayed the development effort greatly."

"Yes. Potential problems became real on a depot repair contract I was associated with. Without background, a KO got off base with respect to turnaround time, defeating the purpose of the award. Granted, this should've been identified by the requiring agency, but the Ko not only didn't challenge the requirement, he didn't know/wasn't familiar enough with the 'system' to know who to call. Once a mistake like this is made, it takes at least a year to fix."

"No! Generally, the requiring activity has access to sufficient experience and technical expertise."

"No. Experience is an important day to day requirement in project management offices but we only refer to the contracting officer for contract specific issues not material requirements issues."

"The case in point I wish to elaborate on relates to the fact that many times I felt PCOs dragged their feet on a procurement. They lose sight as to how important it is to get it out to the field for the soldier."

"Slows action as KO needs PM/user input to determine best clauses structures."

"No, however I have seen cases where Project Managers of the wrong branch were assigned to a project and as a result were less than successful, e.g., FA officer PM of IN project, AV officer PM of FA project."

"No, as a product manager I've been supported by both civilian and military contracting officers. In both cases the support has been outstanding, however, the key to this level of support in PCOs who realize they are part of a contracting team and ask the right questions to bring the appropriate team expertise to bear."

"Yes, while assigned to the Strategic Defense initiative organization I worked with an Air Force captain on various procurement actions. He was effective in contracting for SETA support for the program office but had to be led by the hand on contracting efforts involving the more technical acquisitions because he had no working knowledge of the equipment/systems we were acquiring. here the operational experience was not Army dependent but technical knowledge dependent but supports the contention of requirement for experience."

"No. The biggest detriment has been due to inexperience in the FA 97 arena."

"Yes. Within DLA, Air Force officers are assigned responsibility for Army and Navy Acquisitions. In these cases, the contracting officer was required to solicit extensive help from outside sources to get the job done."

"120mm tank ammo system contract until we assigned 91D O-5 the program was a mess."

"No-but I have seen field experienced FA 97 officers prevent dumb decisions by civilian buyers who lacked field experience."

"No. However the lack of a clear understanding of what it is like to be a part of the uniformed component of the Defense Department often makes it difficult to explain to non-uniformed members the impact of their actions/procedures."

"Many times. When a KO knows the equip, what it looks like, complexity, he can always do a better job; i.e. ACOs in plants do a better job negotiating for spares since they can see the part, touch it, ask questions of their engineers. PCOs back in buying

commands have no conception what they are buying."

"No-most KOs listen to common sense or we get them replaced."

"Yes in the case of civilians but not in the case of military. The military usually have a desire for hands-on familiarity and seek out help."

"Yes. Many contracting officers assigned to Desert Storm only had major system experience-long lead time/production and R&D. They did not know or have any base of service and support contracting for supplies. Most of our positions are in the AMC community--few in FORSCOM where we train for combat. These are two very different kinds of contracting."

"Everyday at ATCOM. As an acquisition officer assigned to PEO AVN, I have to take time to explain everything to the PCO. None of our offices' PCOs are military and as a result every action is delayed because the PCOs have to be 'brought up to speed' on each procurement action (ones that are related to the aircraft we manage). This does not apply to procurement of toilet paper!"

"No. The duties of the PCO while enhanced by understanding the type of equipment being bought/built, are not such that they require operational knowledge."

"No. We have experiences where officers from different branch has spent time to learn the system and is more knowledgeable than branch qualified officers."

"Not detrimental but potentially less effective. 'Green suit' contract specialists/officers are more responsive to actions because of empathy with the PM or soldier in the field."

"Yes. I have seen requirements for unwanted/unneeded equipment procured because the contracting officer did not understand how the system worked, how it was used, and what would do the job just as well at cheaper cost. Lack of user experience also slows down the process as the KO tries to come up to speed."

"No, primarily because all of my contracting officers have been extremely involved with my products/systems over the years, and thus had intimate knowledge of true user concerns and perspectives. (All civilians)."

"JRTC, as OPFOR commander I required several special items; items were requested and constantly had an unknowledgeable KO continuously making subjective changes to quantities or the type/quality of items."

"No. But to the contrary, those PCOs with user experience are a definite help to the PM."

"Yes, the KO lack of knowledge resulted in a procurement action taking twice as long while he came up to speed on the program and its complex technical issues that required user experience."

"No--only concern I have ever had was dealing with PCOs that didn't understand the urgency of getting equip or parts to the field."

"Yes. Lack of understanding of operational requirements resulted in inconsistencies, errors and lack of specificity in contract wording."

"I have seen inefficiencies because a civilian PCO could not relate to the intended use of an item."

"The contracting officer relies on the technical advice he is provided by the PM or MACOM technical staff (i.e. engineering). If there's a problem it can frequently be traced to the quality of the technical staff and advice rendered."

"No, there are adequate review cycles on all procurements (not black projects) for all actions to be done properly by civilians."

"Not military. However, Special Operations background really helps in the SOCOM area."

"Yes. Procurements affecting aircraft on ground, particularly during combat, or critical parts affecting safety of flight (fleetwide groundings) were not handled expeditiously or with proper judgment because the PCO was not an aviator."

"No. My experience with contracting officers (both mil and civ) have been good. Most likely due to the particular individuals training, experience and professionalism."

"No--not if the KO was uniformed, but as a PM I have observed, been a victim of, civilian PCO's lacking a user view."

"No--was very careful in pre-selection and staffing of procurement team to ensure this didn't happen."

"More on the ACO side--it sure doesn't hur to know your commodities."

"The only detriment was when the contracting officer steered away from acquisition principles and bought "specialty" or "gold plated" products they thought the service needed when they were in charge - 10 or 12 years before. So we buy 'old' new technology."

"Yes--some O-3s and below during Desert Storm, however they quickly came up to speed."

"Not directly-many delays, however, in overcoming misinterpretations of user requirements."

"No. The project office provides the user experience in working with the contracting officer."

"Paying a premium for a battery with a marginally longer life. If the KO had field experience he would probably realize that the batteries in question were almost always changed before going out on a mission, not leaving them in the radio until they died. Excessive expenditure of funds."

"As an auditor in north Alabama, my knowledge of missile systems helped speed up several RFP audits by being able to clarify for other auditors SOW requirements. I've had this same experience as a PCO. None fell into a detrimental category since SME engineers can always be made available in time."

"Yes! Contracting officer could not understand why guying a helicopter was any different than buying BDUs! There is a significant difference the level of quality, testing, etc required."

"No, but it could at times."

"My experience has been with DLA civilian ACOs. Most problems come from ACO's understanding a company's business process vs hard Government requirements."

"Lack of user experience will slow down the process time because he/she may not have the knowledge."

"No--on the other hand user experience always tends to enhance the procurement action, but not in all cases."

"Yes--purchasing repair parts for missile systems by individuals who do not understand what they are, complexity, etc has led to wasteful procurements."

"Detrimental only in the sense that the time necessary for a contracting officer to get system 'smart' is extensive. This undoubtedly causes inefficiencies in the early part of a contracting officer's tour of duty."

"No. However I have encountered situations where a lack of general military knowledge has hindered a civilian contracting officer. User experience is only essential during the requirements development portion of the acquisition process."

"Yes. KO had difficulty prioritizing my program because he considered it the M88A1 not M88A2."

"No. It's a business decision. The program office and technical community are the team resources in this situation. Use them."

"No, motivation and an open-mind and common sense or the lack thereof are the key."

"Yes. The situation was the Defense Logistic Service Center was trying to procure a state of the art, random access memory video disc for use in the catalog update business. The procuring activity, DRMS base contracting had no expertise in ADP hardware or software. They couldn't understand the SOW, much less put together a solicitation."

"Only concern that I have had is that some KOs don't have the same sense of urgency that a 'green suiter' may have, since they don't understand how the end item is used. This isn't always bad but it isn't that common."

"Limited delay. PCO sought (rightly so!), answers to question and concerns to reach a level of understanding of the item he was procuring. A user or more experienced PCO would have moved the action quicker."

"No, but it sure makes the PM's job easier if the PCO/ACO can relate to the system and how it will be employed."

"No because all KO I've dealt with had Army experience--At SSDC we have civilian KOs but we were not fielding anything and I don't think it mattered."

"The PCO or KO need not be expert in relation to the technical aspects of a purchase. He needs to have available and use the technical support to confirm that what he is acquiring meets the needs of the customer technically."

"None that I can recall. However it was obvious in some cases where KO was familiar with the equipment and the planning side went smoother."

"I have no military (97) involved in any of my procurement actions--all civilians. They have great depth in procurement matters--little in materiel."

"Yes. Ask most KOs what NOE flight is and they don't know. Without understanding the environment, the gov't KO is at a big disadvantage."

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